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Chapter 1

I stepped outside, taking in the smell. Birds chirped, and the wind blew softly. I looked at the barn that my parents referred to as the animal sanctuary. According to my parents, they take care of sick and injured animals and then release them back into the wild.

I had told them many times how I wanted to help out, but they denied me that privilege, saying that I wasn't old enough. I'm freaking fifteen! How much older do I have to be?

I sighed, sitting down on the bench. It was a pretty cool bench, actually. It was between two trees. One was still living, and one was cut down because it had died. One of the ends rested on the stump. As I was sitting there, I heard the birds chirp and the wind whistle, and saw a squirrel look at me with a certain curiosity.

"Hi, little fella." I cooed. He scampered up the tree, taking glances at me as he ran.

"Weird," I muttered. And it was. I doubted that I had ever seen such a display of curiosity in such a small animal.

You're probably wondering what's with all this rambling about pointless things, and I agree that it's quite pointless. Well, it seems that was. The thing about the squirrel is quite important. But, I'm getting to the most important part.

I had been sitting there, just wondering, waiting. Waiting for what? That, I did not know, but I waited.

Then, I heard a distressed chirping. A songbird chirp. And it sounded like it was hurt. Maybe, just maybe, this is what I needed to prove that I was ready to take care of injured animals! After all, I had tried everything else, from pet-sitting to dog walking, to volunteering at the animal shelter. If that wasn't experience, then this was.

The chirping was still there, and I stood up, searching for the source of the noise. I walked around the yard, looking for the bright reds and yellows commonly seen on songbirds.

Just as I was about to give up, I saw a canary in the grass, chirping. It's wing was bent at an awkward angle. *Probably broken.* I carried it over to the bench, where it continued it's chirps. *Now, to make a splint - or something to hold the wing in place.*

What happened next was the really weird, really important thing.

The canary spoke.

Yes, I said spoke.

"Hello, Madelyn," it began "Do not fear. All will be alright. Be calm."

The canary glowed a shocking yellow and became something. Became a spirit. The body had become a spirit. And that spirit was coming towards me.

All went black.

—

What I did not know is that the little, broken winged canary had changed me. Not mentally, but physically.

—

"Madelyn..." A voice said. I struggled to open my eyes, but I did. It was my father, looking at me. My mom was there too.

"What happened?" I asked.

"We walked out into the front yard and you were laying there!" exclaimed mom.

"Oh," I replied "Well, I'm sure I'm fine now. I gotta get to school. There's a test today!"

"We called the school, and they know you're not coming in today. You can take the test tomorrow."

"Alright," I said, sighing. I didn't want to have to go to study hall and finish my test tomorrow, but hey! At least I got to miss a day of school. The sunlight from outside my window shone brightly, and though I needed to be at school, and I wasn't feeling bad, I had to stay home. Well, every cloud has a silver lining, and this silver lining just happens to be a book.

Mom and Dad left the room, and I stood up, reaching for my book. The eagle bookmark was still in place, and, if I remembered correctly, there were one-hundred seven pages left to read. That is, out of the four-hundred nine pages total. I knew I was going to regret blowing through this book, but to be honest, I didn't give a crap.

The book cover was the second book in my favorite book series, Maximum Ride. I'd have to thank Trinity for introducing me to them. Yep. Once I had read the first book, I went out and bought the rest. Don't judge me, I'm obsessed. And a bookworm. Always a bookworm.

I turned on my radio and opened my book to the bookmarked page. I started reading, but my mind drifted to the thought of the little canary who had glowed, had become a spirit, had went inside of me. *Probably just a dream,* I thought to myself, and went back to my book.

Soon, I had finished my book. I looked up at the clock, closing my book. The clock read 12:02. I tossed my book at the foot of my bed and laid my head down, listening to the music that was playing on the radio. I'm not saying which genre of music, it's none of your buisness.

At 12:05, Dad walked into the room.

"Hey, Madelyn!" greeted my Dad "How are you feeling?"

"I wasn't feeling bad in the first place." I answered "In other words, I

feel fine."

"So, I've got to head to work, and I won't be back until around five-thirty. Will you be fine until then?"

"Yes, Dad." I said, sighing "I've been home alone before; I'll be fine."

"Do you have your phone?" asked Dad.

I nodded.

"Okay. See you then. Bye, Madelyn."

"Bye."

My phone buzzed after a few minutes, and I picked it up. It was a notification from the WritePad app. It was my friend, Trinity. She had private messaged me.

'Why aren't you at school? I miss you.' it read.

I quickly typed back 'Fainted this morning, parents made me stay home. I'm fine. Finished book 2 of Max Ride.'

The reply came quickly back. 'Cool. Teacher coming, bye for now.'

I sat my phone on my bedside table. Then, I heard a voice. Not from outward, but inward. Inside my head.

"Hello, Madelyn."

A/N- So, I started a new book. The Wild Side is on hold until I finish this. Don't worry, it'll be done before the wattys end. Yes, yes I am entering this in the wattys. And I update this every 2 days. And yes, yes I did start reading the max ride series. IT'S SO GOOD!

Sorry, fangirl moment there. But, I gotta go. Vote, comment, and I'll see you in the next chapter! Bye for now!

Chapter 2

"W-who are you? Where are you?" I asked, startled. I mean, who wouldn't?

"You do not have to speak aloud, Madelyn," said the voice. ***"Speak to me within your mind."***

This was it. I was going crazy. I had hit my head too hard and I was hearing voices.

"I assure you, Madelyn, that you are not going crazy. I'm the canary that you saw. But I'm not exactly normal."

"Geez, who would've guessed." I thought sarcastically.

"Now calm down, and I'll explain everything, Madelyn."

I took a deep breath, glanced at my phone, and replied with.
"Alright; explain."

"You know the legends of werewolves and vampires. Well, it's real. But they aren't the only supernatural creatures. There are weres for pretty much every creature that has ever existed. And there's a spirit of the animal within the individual. They provide guidance and support. That's me. I would've been with the council of spirits, where I had a place, had I not been captured. Since council members can assume a physical shape, I did. But after a fox attack, I ended up in your yard. And you know the rest."

"So you're saying..."

"That you can transform into a canary? Yes. Well, other species of bird as well, due to me being part of the council as a representative of avians. They'll find a new representative, surely, but I'll - no, we'll still have access to a wide spectrum of avian choices."

"This isn't real."

"Oh, but it is. And since your dad is out, I was thinking that I could show you how to shift."

Well, if this was fake, I could laugh in this voice's face. Or laugh at it period. I wasn't entirely sure this was real, and I was half-convinced that I was going insane. But if it was real, I would have

the reassurance that I wasn't going insane.

"Alright. So, how do I do this... shapeshifting thingy."

"Go outside first, into a concealed area where nobody can see you. Then, I'll tell you."

I climbed out of bed, smoothing my shirt before walking outside. I went behind the bush that my parents had planted, and then asked the canary *"What do I do next?"*

"Remember what my physical form looked like? Just picture that in your mind, and focus on transforming."

"Okay."

I recalled the moment that had happened mere hours ago. I remembered the yellow feathers, how vibrant they were. I focused on changing. *This isn't going to work,* I thought to myself.

But it did.

Fingers became thinner, becoming the feathers at the end of the wing. A feather pattern rippled across me, and I shrunk. I became lighter, a beak protruding from my beak. My arms were wings, my legs were the small - I guess you could call them talons - of a canary. Not gripping ones of an eagle, however, but good for perching, as I later learned.

I was a canary.

"Congrats." congratulated the canary spirit.

"Thanks." I thanked. *"So, what do I do now?"*

"Flying practice for you. And my name is Ashlea, not 'Canary Spirit'." Ashlea informed.

"Okay."

"Let's begin. You'll need to push off, and flap your wings. Move them in a circular motion, and if you don't succeed at first, don't worry. It's your first try, after all. And we have a good five hours until your dad gets back. "

"What if I fall?"

"The grass and leaves will act as a cushion, absorbing the impact."

"I'm so reassured."

"Trial and error, Madelyn. Trial and error. Now try it; I didn't convince you to come here for nothing."

I tried to relax myself, and then pushed off of the ground. *Circular motion,* I reminded myself, flapping the wings. Yes, wings. I was still trying to get used to the fact that I had wings. I had hoped that I was going to succeed on the first try. Nope.

Nope, I just had to fall on the grass. I just had to.

"Ashlea?"

"Yes?"

"I was hoping to be off the ground, not grounded."

"I told you that you probably wouldn't succeed on your first try, Madelyn. Now get up, try again. One does not simply give up after their first try."

"Fine." I got up, launching myself into the air, flapping, moving my wings in a circular motion. Fell again. Come on. Just... come on.

"Try again, Madelyn. You'll get it, don't give up."

I sighed, pushing myself off the ground. Flapped my wings, moving them in a circular motion. I must've fallen at least ten times before I did it. I was flying. People have dreamt of flying for so long, and now, I was doing it. I was flying!

"Good job, Madelyn." congratulated Ashlea.

"I did it. I'm flying!"

"You are. I knew you could do it, Madelyn."

"What am I doing here? I should be out, flying! Heck, I can fly now!"

"I know you're excited and all, but some predatory birds have been known to attack smaller birds like canaries. Maybe you should just limit it to the neighborhood. And stay off the ground. Don't make the mistake I did."

"Okay."

It wasn't exactly what I had expected, but I was able to fly! And maybe, after Ashlea taught me how to fly, I could go anywhere I wanted to! Now, I had something to look forward to!

"How do I go forward?"

" Turn your body more horizontal. Lean forward. And don't forget to flap."

"Thanks."

I leaned forward, moving forward. I then went up, and the houses seemed to shrink before me. I was flying, and I felt freer than I had ever felt before. Wind rushed by, and other birds flew across the sky. I felt alive!

"Are there any shifters nearby?"

"Possibly. There's a group of cat shifters in the town, but you're safe from them as long as you stay in the sky. But, there are many bird shifters and wolf shifters nearby. Who knows if there are any nearby. But most bird shifters respect each other."

I kept flying, and I was enjoying myself. That is, until a falcon flew up to me. *Oh crap.*

A/N- How did you like the chapter? I enjoyed writing it! Please leave feedback, comments, votes, and I'll see you next chapter! Bye for now!

Chapter 3

"Fly away!" shouted Ashlea ***"Fly away!"***

But another voice spoke to me. "Are you a shifter?" I realized that it was coming from the falcon.

"Did it just speak to me? And why is it asking if I'm a shifter?"

"Like I said earlier, I don't know how many bird shifters are in this area. It might be one."

As I flew away, I asked in a yell "Are you a shifter?"

"Well, I'm talking to you. No normal bird could do that. I know you're a shifter, and you know I'm one now. But I've never seen you around here."

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Trinity. Trinity Alis."

That was the name of my friend.

"Do you happen to have a friend named Madelyn Ruth?"

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"That's me," I answered.

"You're a shifter?"

"Yes. How come you never told me that you're a shifter?"

"You have to be careful who you tell. If you're sure that the person you're telling is a shifter, then that's usually okay because telling their secret increases the chances of themselves getting caught."

"So, you know her?"

"She's my best friend," I answered *"Of course I know her!"*

"Why weren't you at school today?" asked Trinity "Because I know that you didn't just faint. Something else is up."

"Should I tell her?"

"She's your friend. If you can trust her, go for it."

"I did faint. I just became a shifter today." I replied "Long story short, I found a spirit in physical form, she had a broken wing, she went to spirit form. She went inside me, I became a shifter. When she went in me, I fainted, and my parents didn't want me to go to school."

"But only spirits part of the council can assume a physical shape... oh. So, you can change into other species of bird? That's so cool!"

"To be honest, I haven't done that yet. Just shifted today, remember?"

"Oh, right. Sorry if I scared you when I flew up to you. Probably looked intimidating."

"You did. Say, what time is it?"

"It was four when school got out and I shifted, and I've only been flying for like ten minutes. Why do you ask?"

"Dad gets back at around five thirty."

"Did you tell your parents?" Trinity questioned.

"No. Should I?"

"No. You shouldn't. Not until you're good at fleeing, then you can if you really want. I've heard from my mom that sometimes, parents go insane and try to capture their own child and use their power. And then there's the chance of the parents being monster hunters, but that's rare."

"Monster hunters?"

"They hunt shifters, vampires, and other supernatural beings. I've heard that they're extremely dangerous. The ones that are captured are either used as slaves or killed. But there aren't any here. If there were, traps would've been seen."

I let out a sigh of relief. Thank goodness. I had to worry about keeping the secret from my parents, and I didn't want to think about the possibility of being captured.

Suddenly, an idea came to mind.

"Wanna hang out?" I asked.

"Sure!" replied Trinity "Where do you wanna go?"

"You choose - you probably know the best places."

Trinity flew off, and I followed. Eventually, we reached where she wanted me to go. A giant tree seemed to welcome me, and it's leaves rustled in the wind loudly.

"This is it?" I asked.

"Yes. Mom showed it to me a little while back. It's cool, isn't it?"

"Yeah. Wanna see my little area?"

"Sure." I replied. Trinity flew to a thick, leafless branch. There was a hollow inside of it, which contained a bag. What the bag contained, I didn't know.

"I hang out here sometimes. Camped out here once, mom got mad and I was grounded for a week. But it's relaxing. Especially when you get to see the sunset."

After a brief pause, I heard Trinity start to talk again. "This is so nice, getting to tell you about all the fun things I do when I'm shifted. The barrier that I felt before I knew you were a shifter has been broken down, you know?"

"I just became a shifter today." I reminded. "But you're right. This is nice."

"I almost forgot that this happened just today. That must be weird, having all of this happen in a day. First becoming a shifter, and then finding out that I'm one too. If you need anyone to talk to about this, just come and see me. Okay?"

"Okay."

Suddenly I remembered that Dad was coming home at five thirty.

"Hey Trin," I began, shortening her name "What time is it? Do you happen to have a watch in your bag?"

Trin glanced at her bag before responding with "No." I sighed.

"But I do have a spare phone. Mom told me to keep a cheap phone. She is a shifter, after all. It tells time and makes calls. That's it. But I can check the time for you."

After Trinity managed to open the bag with her talons, she checked the time.

"It's four forty-nine." I heard Trinity inform "Wanna stay here for a little, until five fifteen? That should leave you enough time to get home."

"It should," I replied. "So, what type of bird do you shift into? I know it's a falcon of some sort. I've just been wondering."

"Peregrine falcon," Trinity answered "Same type as my parents."

"Peregrine, peregrine," I muttered. I had heard the name that bird species of before. "Isn't that the bird that can fly two-hundred miles per hour?"

"At most, yep."

"Dang. That's fast."

We chatted, hung out, and laughed until it was five fifteen. Then, I

(sadly) had to leave.

"I'll see you at school tomorrow." I told Trinity.

"I'll see you then. Bye!"

"Bye."

I flew back, still a little shaky in flight. I was like, *remember to flap!* It was weird, and I figured it would take many flights to get used to it. I dove behind a bush, landing.

"Just so you know, once you first shift, it affects your human self. Rarely is it something as drastic as wings, it's often just a change in eye color. Nothing colored contacts can't solve."

I was reassured in that. Being the cosplayer I am, I kept colored contacts for cosplay usage. I shifted back, human features returning. I felt lighter and felt something behind me. I looked and felt fear fill me.

Large, yellow feathered wings were the sight that I saw.

A/N- Did anyone catch the foreshadowing in chapter one? Anyone? No?

Okay. I hope you enjoyed reading this chapter as much as I enjoyed writing it. New chapter in 2 days, keep your eyes out for it. I have to go, but please comment, vote, and share GWSTB with your friends! I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now.

Chapter 4

Yes, I did just say wings. My clothing was ripped some, and my wings were sticking out of two slits.

"Oh, crap. How am I supposed to hide this from my parents?"

"I'll help you. Now, the best thing to do is to go in the house before anyone sees you. And hurry."

I rushed into the house, quickly. Thank goodness there wasn't anyone around. But there would be soon. My parents. They weren't here yet, but when they got here, it would be bad. Very bad. I glanced behind me, seeing tail feathers. Dangit. This just got even harder.

"Calm down, Madelyn. We'll figure this out. Do you have any costumes that could cover it?"

"I'm not wearing a costume. I do have one, but I'm not spending the rest of my life in a count Dracula costume."

"Why do you have a cou..."

"It was a dare, alright? I got fifty bucks. And they gave me the costume for free. Sure, I had to spend the entire school day in a costume, but I got fifty bucks."

"What some people do for money."

"Hey! My parents had cut off my allowance and I was broke!"

"We have bigger matters. You should pack a bag, just in case you have to leave."

"Why would I have to le..." It hit me. If my parents found out, I'd have to leave.

"You see now, don't you. But I doubt there's anything we can do."

My phone started to ring, and I picked it up. It was from Trinity.

"Uhm... Madelyn. A little help. I seem to have shifted back with, Uhm..."

"Wings? Me too."

"Can you come over here?" asked Trinity.

"I'll be over quick. Bye."

I hung up the phone, getting an idea.

"Do you think Trinity's family would take me in for a little? They are shifters, after all."

"Perhaps. You do understand that this is a bad situation, right? You can never go out in public again unless you wish to be captured."

"Ashlea, maybe I could tell my parents. And if they try and capture me, I can just fly out the window and go to Trinity's."

"Do you know how dangerous that is, telling your parents? You could die - or worse. You could be experimented on."

"That won't happen, Ashlea."

I heard my parents walk through the door. *They're home.*

"Don't do this, Madelyn."

I finished packing, placing my books and tablet into my bag. It was a good size tablet, with Bluetooth headphones. Sorry, it's just the techie in me wanting to share the facts. I took a deep breath and stepped out into the living room. What happened next was unexpected.

"Mom, Dad, come out into the living room. There's something I need to show you."

They did, and then pulled out a sword made of some sort of metal. Maybe copper - I didn't know at the time. Not that it mattered back then.

"Shifter filth." muttered my dad.

He ran at me, but I dodged, instinctively flying up. What was going on? A bow was pulled out, and an arrow was shot. I flew out of the way, feeling fear overtake me. My mom drew an arrow, shot it, and it pierced my wing. I saw blood taint the yellow feathers.

"Why are you doing this?" I asked, "What did I do to you?"

"You're a shifter," replied my dad "We need no other explanation. We, humans, are the superior species. We are the hunters, and you shifters deserve to be the hunted."

"Why should what I am determine how you treat me?" I fired back.

They offered no reply, and pulled out guns. *I hope they're not loaded.*

However, they were. I flew into my room, grabbing my backpack. I realized my mistake. I had trapped myself. I was being fired at - by my own parents, I might add.

"Can you break a window?"

"No."

"Don't freak out, alright?"

A sudden feeling washed over me; like something else was controlling me. I flew over the heads of my parents, hearing shouts, screams, and the sound of gunshots. I hadn't expected them to be that loud.

I was being controlled by something else - someone else.

"Ashlea, is that you?"

"What was your first guess?"

"So yes?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"This is desperate. And I've been practicing for years."

Ashlea, who was controlling me, opened the door, and I flew out. My body was under my control again. I flew up, going as high as I could. I didn't want to be shot at. I sat on a thick tree branch, my wing aching.

"That was freaky."

"Sorry. I didn't want you to die, though. So, you have everything you need?"

"I have money, a set of clothes, my tablet, my phone, my chargers, and my headphones."

"No food?"

"Nope."

"You do know that you wouldn't be able to use the money. Your wings would show, and you could imagine what would happen if

you walked into a store."

I sighed, realizing my mistake.

"Am I going to starve?"

"Well, if you want to hunt prey or eat bird seed, then you won't starve. But you'll need to learn how to hunt."

"I'm heading to Trinity's."

I pulled my phone out of my bag, seeing that I had missed a call. It was from Trinity. I tapped 'call back', and after a few rings, Trinity answered.

"Where are you?" she asked "I've been waiting. It's only a matter of time before mom comes into my room!"

"Long story short, after I got wings, I showed my parents and tried to explain, but they attacked me and I ran away from them. My wing has an arrow in it and I'm in pain. Could you come and help?"

Yes, yes I did have to throw all of that onto her at once.

"Use the share location thing and I'll come."

"Bye."

I hung up, then went onto text messaging. I sent my location, and soon, Trinity had come.

"Dang, that looks painful. I doubt I can get you to my house, though."

My wound stung. "Then get your parents!"

"How am I supposed to explain this," she gestured toward her wings "To my parents?"

"Would you rather have me in pain day after day? Go get your parents!"

After a long wait, two peregrine falcons and Trinity flew up to the tree. One of the falcons de-morphed, becoming Trinity's mom.

"Oh dear."

A/N- How did you like that chapter? Did you see that coming? I bet you didn't!

Sorry, had a little moment back there. Please, comment (nobody commented on the last chapter), vote, and share. Bye for now!

Chapter 5

"What do you mean?" I asked "Other than, you know, there being an arrow in my wing!"

Trinity's mom landed on the branch beside me, assuming a human shape. It was weird, watching the body parts contort and change. I didn't know how long it would take to get used to it.

Wow, talk about sentences you'd never think you'd say. Well, think. My wing ached, and I glanced at the blood-stained feathers. I grasped the branch, trying to release the pain that I was feeling. I felt hot, the wounds burning in agony. I felt my face bear a grimace.

"Nothing, Madelyn. It's just that... it looks like a deep wound. It's going to take a while for it to heal itself. Well, normally. I forgot that you're not human anymore. Shifters have an increased healing rate. That is, unless they're shot with the substance that is the weakness of their species."

"What's the weakness substance for bird shifters?" I asked. There's another strange sentence. That makes several today.

"Bronze." she replied.

Wait, wasn't I shot with bronze? What does bronze even look like in the first place?

"Now, we need to get you to our house." Trinity's mom informed, then looked at Trinity "You assist Madelyn from your side. Your father and I will assist her from the other."

Trinity nodded, and I watched as her mom shifted into a falcon. An idea came to mind.

"Why can't I shift?" I asked. "Then I could fly to your house, and everything would be alright."

"It would put stress on the injury, and hinder the recovery." she explained. "And it would take even longer for it to heal."

"Alright." I stood up, still feeling the extreme pain of my injury. I glanced once again at the once yellow feathers, now tainted with my own scarlet blood. I felt sick - the sight of blood always made me feel sick.

Trinity flew to my side, and I the flapping of wings as I was lifted off of the branch. I had expected it to work. I had expected to be flown home, and to be helped.

But we went down. It was at a steady pace; well, not exactly steady. It was fast, but not so fast that we were harmed. People stared, and I heard whispers echo through the groups of people.

"Run!" shouted Trinity's mom, and we all listened. Well, the parents flew. Trinity and I ran. I ran quicker than I normally did. I wanted to escape the groups among groups of people whispering about me. Over my shoulder, I shouted "It's a costume!"

That seemed to do the trick, until a little boy pulled a feather from my wing. Surprisingly, it hurt a lot.

"Oww!"

Pain rippled through my body, renewing the now dulled pain of the injury. It was back to full pain, and my muscles ached as I went faster, feet pumping.

Cars honked; I was probably in the way of some of them, but I didn't care. My side ached, and a sharp pain stung at my side. Eventually, I turned the corner and reached Trinity's house. Her mom opened the door, and I rushed in, sitting on the black couch. I was tired; my breathing was heavy.

"You do know that she's going to remove the arrow, right?"

I sighed. *"I know. But it's going to hurt, and I'm already in a lot of pain."*

"Would you rather be captured with no way to escape?"

"You make a good point. And you made a good point about me not telling my parents, even if they were going to find out anyway. Go ahead, say I told you so."

"Madelyn, I'm not a jerk. I'm not gonna rub things in your face. Understand?"

"I understand."

Trinity's mom walked up to me. "I'm going to have to remove the arrow."

I sighed. "I figured. Just get it over with."

"When I get to one, I'll pull. Three."

She pulled. Instead of waiting until she got to one, she pulled right away.

"What was that for?" I questioned "You said you weren't gonna pull until you got to three! I wasn't prepared!"

"That was the point. You weren't prepared, and you were less tense, and less likely to pull away."

I looked at her, sighing. My wound still ached - no, burned - but it better to not have to feel the presence of the arrow.

"I'm going to make dinner." announced Trinity's dad, and Trinity sat on the other side of me.

"So," I asked the two "Why did Trinity get wings?"

Trinity's mom began to speak. "Though many mysterious and strange things happen to supernatural beings like ourselves, this has a simple explanation." She looked at Trinity "Do you know why I told you to stay away from those who have shifted for the first time?"

I looked at Trinity, and she shook her head "That's because there's the chance of them shifting back with features that will make them stand out to humans, like tail feathers or wings. Any shifter who is around them while they are in their animal form for the first time has the chance to receive the trait. That's why you have wings."

"I'm sorry Trin." I apologized, using her nickname "It's my fault."

"It's not your fault." replied Trinity "And we'll make it through this, just like we made it through being bullied by Lucinda."

"But this is huge. And I don't even know if we'll be captured. We were seen by all of those people, and they saw you fly. They saw those wings moving. Your wings, Trinity. Surely someone's reported it by now."

"But we lost them." said Trinity's mom, joining in on the conversation "And plus, they'd need a picture to prove it. And I didn't see any cameras."

Trinity's dad walked in, carrying two plates. They were placed on the coffee table, and I began eating. Two more plates of food were brought out, and after we finished eating, I asked Trinity's mom a question.

"Why were my parents shooting at me? And I'm pretty sure they were using bronze. Were they trying to kill me or something?"

Trinity's mom didn't speak for a brief moment, as if recalling something.

"It seems to me," she began "that your parents are hunters."

A/N- How did you like this chappie? Be grateful, because 3/4 of the

way done, it got deleted, and I had to rewrite the entire chapter. Wattpad, y u no like my chappie?

Also, please comment on which cover you like more, the current one, or the one in the media.

Anyway, please comment (I enjoyed the comments on the last chapter. I got myself a fangirl army!), vote, and share GWSTB (Girl who Speaks to Birds) with your friends! Bye for now!

Chapter 6

"What do you mean?"

Then, everything came back to me. What Trinity had said about hunters attacking the supernatural, either killing them or using them as slaves.

"But you said that you'd know if there were hunters. You said that there weren't any traps!"

"We only assumed that there were no hunters because there were no traps." explained Trinity's mom "But now that we know, we need to be especially careful. And that means no leaving the house, you two. Your wings would stick out like a sore thumb."

I sighed, but then replied with "Alright."

"Now, let's get the wound bandaged, and then it's off to bed. We have a futon you can sleep on, Madelyn."

"I'm not going to be sleeping on an actual bed for a while, am I?"

She shook her head. "I'm sorry. But I'll hold off on giving you schooling for a week, if that makes you feel any better."

"Thanks." I thanked "Say, can I go lay down now?"

"Like I said, I need to bandage the wound first. I'm gonna warn you; it's gonna sting."

I sighed, for what seemed the millionth time today, and braced myself for the pain. Fire seemed to burn in my wound as the wrap was placed over my injured wing. It stung worse than I had ever

felt. I closed my eyes, gripping the couch's material. Soon, the pain dulled, and I relaxed.

"Come on Madelyn," began Trinity "Let's head to my room."

I nodded, pain rushing through my body as I stood up. I walked to the room, catching a glimpse of the night sky through a window.

"Man, it's late." I remarked.

"Yes, it is."

I glanced at the clock, which read 11:11. *So many ones.* Trinity lifted the futon down, and I sat on it. I glanced at my bandaged wing. Blood stained the material, and I could smell the unpleasant scent coming off of it. I zipped open my bag, removing my phone from it. *Looks like I have some Writepad notifications.*

There were three notifications. Two followers and a vote. Nothing too big.

"I'm heading to sleep." I commented "Goodnight."

"Night." I heard Trinity reply.

Though my mind was racing, I eventually calmed, and exhaustion took over. Before I knew it, it was day.

My eyes opened, and I took in my surroundings. *Where am I?*

"Don't you remember?"

The events of the day before rushed back to me. I had become a bird shifter, found out that my friend was one, had gotten wings, was shot at by my parents, injured by them, and found out that they were hunters.

"I do. Yesterday was quite the day."

"It was."

All of a sudden, the pain in my wing rushed back to me.

"Dangit." I muttered.

"Do you happen to have some sort of medicine or way to block the pain?" I asked, gripping at the futon, trying to relieve my pain.

"Sorry."

"So that's a no?"

"Yes, it's a no."

"Oh."

I noticed that Trinity wasn't in the room. I leapt from the futon, leaving the room. The air smelled of pancakes. Yum. I reached the kitchen, and a welcome sight was before me. They seemed to be the perfect color, made just right. And there were chocolate chips too!

"Thank you." I thanked.

"No problem." Then, Trinity's mom looked at Trinity "I'm going to do some stuff today, errands and such. Your father is at work. Don't answer the door for anybody, alright?"

Trinity's mom slung a bag over her shoulder. "I'll see you at around three. Bye."

"Bye." I said, finishing up the pancakes. I heard the door shut, and I stood up, feeling pain yet again. Why did I have to be attacked? Why did my parents have to be hunters? I noticed Trinity was sitting on the couch, and I sat beside her.

"Hey Madelyn." I heard Trinity greet.

"Hi." I replied "Why did my parents have to go and attack me like that? They're my parents. They're supposed to support me in everything. Yet they went and attacked me."

"Some people are soul-less. They're hunters. I didn't know that. Nobody did. Don't blame yourself."

Trinity began to speak. "Hunters are evil, Madelyn. And I told you not to tell your parents. I had a feeling something like this would happen if it was told."

"But how was I supposed to hide these," I gestured towards my wings "From my parents?"

"I don't know. But now you're injured, and if they attacked, you could die!"

I sighed. "I know. Can we watch tv or something? I don't want to talk about my chances of survival."

"Okay." The tv was switched on, and the channel that was on was the news.

"In Haines City, Florida, two kids with wings were found dropping from the sky. Here is the footage given to us by an anonymous viewer."

Please, by some rare chance, don't let it be us. But it was. It was myself, with my injured wing, and Trinity. I watched in horror as the video caught Trinity flying, and my yelling as the feather was plucked.

The video ended. "Investigators are searching for the pair of

children with wings. If you have any information on the winged kids, please call the number on your screen."

"Holy crap." I commented "This is bad."

"Agreed. I'm gonna call mom."

I nodded, an anxious feeling rising up inside of me. I felt sick to my stomach. *It's just my nervousness,* I told myself.

"Not trying to make you freak out, but this is bad. Remember what I told you about possible experimentation? Well, that's what's gonna happen if your wing doesn't heal fast."

"And how long is it going to take to heal?" I asked, fearing what the answer would be.

"With normal weapons, it'd be about a week, due to the quick healing of shifters. But because you were attacked with bronze, it'll take about a month or two to completely heal. Don't freak out; we'll figure this out."

"But I can't fly, and they're searching for us. For us. And I doubt they'll be easily stopped. Oh, what are we going to do?"

A/N- How did you like this one? We've got some tension building, and the wound's going to impact them a lot. They're in deep trouble now. I've got you on the edges of your seats! Me, being the author that I am, am going to keep you there until Saturday, which is when next update comes out.

Anyway, please comment, vote, follow me (if you're not already), and share this story with your friends, family, heck, you could read it to the dog! I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 7

I listened in to the conversation between Trinity and her mom.

"Someone caught us on video," explained Trinity "It was on the news. What do we do?"

There was a long period of silence. Well, just for me. Trinity's mom was talking to Trinity, but I couldn't hear."

"I'll tell Madelyn. When will you be home?"

Silence. Then, "I'll see you then, bye."

Trinity hung up, then looked at me.

"Get some food and your bag. Then head to the basement."

"Your house has a basement?" I asked.

"Yes. Now go. My mom will be home soon, and we don't know when they'll get there. And the people searching for us might've traced our call. I don't know. But get your stuff and head down to the basement."

I nodded, my heart beating fast. I had a good enough sense to know what would happen if I didn't hide. I ran to my room, quickly grabbed my bag, and dashed to the kitchen. *What will last long,* I asked myself.

"Rice. There's also honey and sugar."

"I'm not gonna live off of honey, rice, and sugar. And besides, how would I cook the rice?"

"You could make a fire."

I sighed. *"Fine."*

I grabbed a box, placing it into a bag, along with a couple of chocolate chip granola bars. I didn't know how long it would last, and I didn't care. Hey, just because we're gonna be on the run doesn't mean that I can't have my chocolate.

"It won't last long. Granola can spoil."

"Well, I want chocolate."

I spotted a box of pop-tarts.

"And these too."

I shoved the box in my bag.

"Plus, you're going to teach me how to hunt, correct?"

"I am. Just head to the living room so Trinity can show you where the basement."

I walked to the living room, my pace fast.

"You ready?" asked Trinity.

I nodded.

"Follow me."

Trinity led me back to where I just had been; the pantry.

"Uhm... I was just here. And I don't see a basement."

"Look down at under the shelves."

I looked and saw a door. A small, square door.

"Oh. So, we go in?"

"Yes." She swung open the door, and a dark abyss was what I saw. Okay, I know I'm exaggerating a bit, but it looked pretty dark.

"Is it safe?" I asked, my voice trembling.

"Yes. We go down here sometimes for drills, and we went back there a few days ago. It's perfectly safe."

"Alright," I said with a sigh. Trinity got to her hands and knees, crawling in. I copied her stance, following her. When I shut the door, I couldn't see a thing. A foul odor drifted into my nose.

"What died in here?" I questioned.

"Two mice and a rabbit. And there was that lizard too."

"Please tell me you're kidding."

"I'm not. Sorry."

"Gross."

"You do realize that you're going to have to start hunting soon, right?"

"Ashlea? Please stop."

"I'm just reminding you."

All of a sudden, I thought of the perfect nickname.

"Tweety bird, stop."

"Don't call me that."

I sighed. *"Fine, I'll stop."*

"For now," I muttered under my breath.

"I heard you, Madelyn."

"Fine, I'll stop."

I continued to work my way through the tunnel. My wings ached from having to hold them in, but I knew that I wouldn't be able to fit into the tunnel if they were spread out. I sighed, feeling the hard material scratch at my knees. Soon, I saw the room. I was only able to see a glimpse of it, as Trinity was in front of me, but I saw it.

"Is this it?" I asked.

"Yep." I heard her answer "It conceals pretty well, but it's not soundproof. So, we'll have to be quiet. Every sound we make can be heard from the pantry."

So, no music without headphones. At least I brought my Bluetooth ones.

"Okay. So, are we gonna communicate via texts?"

"Sorry to break it to you, but phone service doesn't reach here."

"Do you have wi-fi down here or something?"

"No, but I doubt that we'll be down here for long."

"So, what do we do?" I asked, sitting on the cold, concrete floor.

"If you brought your phone, you could listen to music."

"Alright. I have eight hours of music, let it begin."

I pulled out my phone and headphones and started at the beginning of my favorite track. I had created it, and it was composed of all my favorite songs. I hummed softly to the tune of Demons. I smiled. Even in the middle of chaos, Imagine Dragons could always bring a smile to my face.

About one-fourth of the way through the track, I heard the sound of

footsteps. Alarmed, I looked in the direction of the noise. It was Trinity's mom. I paused the song that was on; Jar of Hearts, and waved at her, relieved.

"Hi." I greeted.

"Are you two prepared?" she asked. What? No hi, hello, what's up?

I nodded and saw that Trinity had done the same.

"That's good. We'll work in shifts, listening for the people. I'll go first. " she instructed. I nodded, turning the music back on. The tunes started, and I relaxed. So much had happened yesterday and today, and I really needed to relax. Seriously, I think that much stress is bad for you. Song after song assured me that everything was going to be alright.

After an hour or so, someone tapped on my shoulder. It was Trinity's mom. I paused the music, removing the headphones.

"It's your shift." she whispered, and I nodded, getting to my feet. I then kneeled down beside he entrance. My bag was beside me, and I listened intently. The safety of Trinity, her mom, and I depended upon me. My heartbeat was fast, and I felt scared. I bit nervously at my already short nails. Funny, they were all fairly long before yesterday. I tried to calm myself, lowering my hand.

Almost an hour had passed when I sneezed.

"I heard something coming from there." said a voice.

Oh. Crap.

A/N- How did you like this chapter? Madelyn and her friends are in some deep trouble now. Wanna find out what happens to the trio? Come back on Monday to find out. And yes, the songs that I mentioned are some of my favorites

Also, only two weeks and we're at 251 reads! Thank you so much! Also, it's amazing what a good cover can do for a book. I mean wow, we're at one fourth of 1k!

I've gotta go, but I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 8

I turned my head to Trinity and her mom.

"They're here," I whispered.

"Hide." instructed Trinity's mom.

I nodded and got on my hands and knees, crawling behind the couch. I had to scooch the couch forward some, but hopefully nobody would notice. I was laying on my side, and some of my wings peeked out, but I was gonna have to risk in. I pulled my bag closer to me. My hands trembled as I started biting at my nails.

"Calm down, Madelyn."

"I am calm. Fine, I'm kidding. How the heck am I supposed to be calm? What is this calm you speak of?"

"Just try to relax."

"How am I supposed to relax? People are invading!"

"Be ca..."

She was cut off by the sound of arguing.

"Hand me the taser, David!" I heard a voice shout.

Then, in a loud whisper, Trinity's mom said something. "Behind the dresser, there's an escape route. You two go; I'll fight them off."

"But they have a taser." I informed "You can't just go out there!'

"I'm taking a risk for your safety. Plus, I'm strong enough to fight them off. Grab your things and go!"

I crawled out from behind the couch and moved the dresser aside. Well, with the help of Trinity's mom.

"Go. And Madelyn, there's a first aid kit with medicines, ointments, and bandages in it. Be sure to take care of your wing. I'll catch up with you two."

Trinity and I both nodded, and she went into the tunnel first. I followed her, and darkness encased us as Trinity's mom put the dresser back in its original position.

I waited, listening for the sound of the men. All was quiet until a voice broke the silence.

"Where are the girls with wings?"

I knew that it was Trinity's mom who spoke next. "I'll never tell!"

"Oh, but that implies that you know, doesn't it? Surely a pretty woman like yourself would hate to be tased, isn't that right? Tell me where the girls are."

"Your empty threats don't frighten me."

"Oh, but we both know that's a lie."

Silence.

"Did they kill her?"

"I doubt that. They'd be facing prison if they did. I think that they merely tased her."

"Merely?!"

Trinity tapped on my shoulder. "We need to go. My mom will catch up with us. But we'll be the ones captured if we don't make like a bun truck."

Oh, I had heard that joke before.

"And haul buns?"

"Sure. Now, we need to go."

I nodded, and grabbed the first aid kit. I continued to listen, hearing threats and defenses. The material of the tunnel seemed to nip at my skin, and as I dragged my knees, they gained scrapes. Minor ones, though, not ones as bad as the one on my wing.

"Are you sure your mom is gonna be alright?" I asked, concerned.

"Yeah, she'll be fine. When I was nine, we lived in an area that gained a lot of hunters. But we're still safe and living. She protected us well. This is no different."

"Alright, as long as your mom is safe. You're lucky to have parents who love you. My parents **shot me with an arrow.**"

"Keep it down." I heard Trinity instruct me "Do you want them to hear us?"

"No. I'll be quiet."

The tunnel went down at an angle, and everything remained dark.

A shiver ran up my spine, cold wind rippling through the tunnel. I looked behind myself, seeing a face.

"Run!" I shouted "He found the tunnel!"

I moved as fast as I could, adrenaline moving through my veins. I twitched with fear and tension, and I could hear the sound of the men pouring into the tunnel. *I need to go faster!*

Trinity ran ahead of me, her fear apparent. She was even faster than I was, and I tried to match her pace. Cold air made me shiver, and I honestly didn't care. I looked behind myself to see a man holding something, and I could see the outline of something. He was aiming it at me. It was a gun.

"Run!" I shouted, stress tugging at me like a fish hook. Nervousness made my breath short, and I trembled in fear. I pulled my wings in closer to myself. I saw a light at the end of the tunnel, and hope overtook me.

Then, something horrible happened. Well, almost. Confused? I'll get back to the explaining.

I heard the whooshing of something behind me, and I looked. It was a dart - a tranquilizer dart. I couldn't escape; I was going to be captured!

A blast of pain overtook me, and my skin seemed to burn. I closed my eyes tight. Pain rippled through me in waves of torture. I let out a screech, my fists clenching. Then, the pain went. I felt smaller, but all pain gone.

I opened my eyes, looking at myself. I was a hummingbird. I was coated in colorful feathers, and the wounds on my wing weren't there anymore.

"Tweety, what did you do?"

"One, don't call me Tweety. It's Ashlea. And two, I took over to save you. I knew it would hurt you - it hurt me too - but I had to do it. Now, fly out of here."

"What about Trinity?"

"She's fine. If you hadn't noticed, she's almost out. However, those men are trying to shoot at you. Fly the heck out of here!"

I leaped up, trying to remember what Ashlea had taught me. I beat my wings as quick as I could. Flap, flap, flap. I went forward, fast. Faster than they could aim. They weren't gonna hit me anytime soon. I leaned forward, moving forward. I was in an alley, with boxes and soda cans strewn about. A stray ray of light shone in.

I watched as Trinity shoved several boxes over the exit of the tunnel.

"Madelyn, did you shift?" she asked "You weren't supposed to."

"You can talk to her, you know."

"Yes, I did. And I know that; the canary spirit - a.k.a Ashlea - did it."

"Alright. Mom told me about a city of shifters in the forest. We'll stay here until you're well enough to to travel."

"Or you could carry my bag and we could fly there." I suggested.

"I doubt I could carry it. Now unshift, and we'll stay here until you're good enough to travel."

I shifted back, the wound no longer there.

"Ashlea, explain, now."

"Shifters have gifts. Some have fire control, some have control over auras. I believe you have control over healing."

A/N- More things are being uncovered. What's gonna happen next?

Also, 318 reads in 16 days. Dang, that was fast. Thank you so much. First person to write a comment over 500 characters gets a dedication.

I've gotta go, don't forget to comment, vote, and share. I'll (hopefully) see ya in the comments! Bye for now.

Chapter 9

"Uhm... Madelyn?" began Trinity "What just happened?"

"According to Ashlea, I have a power."

"Over healing? But nobody with control over healing could ever heal wounds caused by bronze. It's impossible!"

"Well, the impossible is now possible. I don't know why, and if Ashlea could be bothered to tell me, I'd be a lot happier." I said, hoping she'd take the hint.

"I honestly don't know. I'm as shocked as you. But hey, look on the bright side; at least you're not injured."

"She doesn't know," I explained "But we need to get to that shifter society."

I snatched up my bag, flapping my wings. I moved them quickly,

struggling to get into the air. I had only flown twice, and I wasn't that used to it. Heck, I had only found out about this yesterday! I looked over my shoulder, seeing Trinity fly up.

"You ready to go?" she asked, and I nodded. "Then let's go."

I flew straight out of that alley, going up, up, up. The wind blew my hair back, and it was exhilarating. I felt so free, so alive. I took a deep breath, feeling so safe, calm, and relieved. I flapped my wings, moving them to propel myself through the air. I looked to my side, seeing Trinity propel herself up beside me.

"This feels amazing," I commented, facing the wind. My hair moved in ripples behind me. No wonder people have dreamt of flying; it's amazing.

"Isn't it?" I heard Trinity reply "I remember when I first shifted. It was so beautiful. I was actually a little upset that my parents had kept it from me. My parents! I have to go back and rescue them!"

"Trinity," I began "Calm down. Breathe in, breathe out. We'll go and rescue her. I doubt they have headed to your father's work yet. Now, show me where it is, and we'll fly there."

"But they'll see our wings." Trinity pointed out. Right.

"Then we'll be stealthy and sneak in. Now, show me where he is."

Trinity nodded, darting through the air with her powerful wings. Peregrine falcon. Right.

"Wait for me!" I shouted, trying to catch up with her. She stopped for a minute and I flew up next to her.

"Sorry." she apologized.

"Don't be," I replied "You're concerned for your family. That's fine."

Trinity nodded, and I followed her. When I saw her father's work, my jaw dropped.

It was smoldering, fire covering every visible part of the building.

Men clad in red shot water at the building, trying to tame the vicious flames. I looked at Trinity, seeing a horrified expression being worn upon her face.

"We have to go save my dad!" she shouted.

"It's too dangerous!" I argued "And I doubt that he's dead. He's a shifter. Surely he's found a way out!"

A voice shouted at me from below. "Shifters! Come here. I'm from the village; we will help you. Just come here, and we will assist you."

I looked down, seeing a girl about seventeen staring up at us. I glanced at Trinity.

"Can we trust her?"

"I don't know. " began Trinity "But she knows that we're shifters."

An idea came to mind. "How about this. We fly up above her and tell her to shift. If she does, we can trust her. If not, we fly away."

"I don't know." I heard Trinity "My dad could be trapped in there!"

"But if she's from the shifter village, she could help us!"

Trinity sighed, and I watched as she glanced at the burning ruins.

"Let's go."

I flew towards her, trying to get the rhythm of the wing beats correct.

"If you're from the shifter village, then shift. Prove that you're on our side." I instructed.

"I knew you'd want me to. Can't be too careful these days. Just make sure nobody's watching, and I'll do it."

I looked around. Nobody saw the peculiar sight that was Trinity and I; they were all focused on the smoldering building. I saw smoke

rise from the ruins, and many people coughed raspily. But none of the people were looking at us.

"Nobody's looking." I informed "Now shift."

I watched as brown fur enveloped her, and she fell to her hand and feet. They were now hooves. He face protruded and her bones crunched. She was changing into a deer.

After she had shifted, she looked at the both of us. My jaw had dropped, and I probably looked stupidly shocked.

"Shift back and take us to the shifter village."

"But Madelyn," I heard Trinity begin "What about my dad? He could still be in there!"

At that very moment, a feather drifted down. It looked singed at the edges.

The girl, who had shifted, began to speak. "It looks a little singed at the tips, but otherwise, it's okay." She looked at Trinity "Does this feather look like your father's?"

Trinity nodded, and the girl started to speak again. "It looks to me that your father got a tab burnt, but is otherwise alright. We'll help you find him once we get to the town. Now, follow me from the air. In your bird forms, preferably. It was quite irresponsible of you two to go flying about the human town as you are now."

"But what about our items?" I asked.

She sighed. "Fine, but be careful. I'll shift; you two follow me."

I nodded, as did Trinity, and we flew up. I watched the girl as she changed into a deer, and then bounded towards the woods. We followed her, and soon, we were in the forest. As I looked to the side, I saw two dogs playing. I went lower, listening in to their conversation.

"Come here, mutt butt!" barked one.

"Just because my mom was a lab shifter and my dad was a poodle shifter doesn't mean I'm a mutt!"

I laughed to myself, flying up to join Trinity. I felt the air blow back my hair, and I went up, feeling the thrill of flying overtake me. I was free.

A/N- How did you like that chapter? I enjoyed writing it. Madelyn and Trinity have reached the Shifter Town, but what awaits them there?

Please vote, comment, and share! I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 10

I looked below me, seeing the girl assume her human form. She motioned for us to fly down, and I did. What I saw next startled me.

A black panther stood in front of me, watching me. Its tail moved slightly, and it seemed to glare at me. I stepped back, folding my wings in tightly. I clutched my bag handle tightly, shaking in fear.

Then, it changed, becoming a man. Fur seemed to shrink back, going where it was. The muzzle became a nose and mouth. He looked at me, and I looked back at him. Then, he spoke.

"Why were you so reckless as to display yourselves to humans?" he boomed. I stepped back, aware that he could transform. He seemed to emit a dominant attitude, and his tone frightened me.

"W-well, sir," I began "I-I became a shifter just yesterday, and when I shifted back, I had wings, as you can see. I told my parents, and they shot at me with bronze."

"I don't see any wounds."

"Apparently, I have control over healing."

"But it's impossible to do that with bronze!" he exclaimed.

"Well, I did. Give the newbie a prize!"

"Get on with why you showed the humans." he commanded.

"Well, turns out that Trinity" I gestured towards her "Also received wings, and she had called me earlier to tell me. And it's not like I could call 911. Just imagine: '991, I'm a bird girl stuck in a tree.' So, I told her what had happened, and she came. But, she couldn't do it on her own. And I couldn't; my wing had been shot with an arrow. So, she brought her parents over, and they shifted because they don't have wings in human form. But I couldn't stay in the air, so we fell. People saw, it got on the news, a group hunted us down. Trinity's mom; I don't know what happened to her, and her father is missing; the building burned down. But the deer shifter here thinks he's still alive."

"You mean Saige?" he asked.

"If that is her name, then yes," I replied.

"Saige will escort you to the spare cabin. Your punishment is to be decided later."

I gulped, fear rising up inside me. "Punishment?"

"Yes. Such irresponsible actions deserve punishment."

Saige started to speak. "Follow me, girls."

I nodded, feeling nervous. I was speechless. Just a few days ago, I was a normal girl in a seemingly normal family, and now I was facing punishment in a society of animal shifters. Did my life somehow get transported into a fantasy book or something? I bit at my nails, wishing I had gum or something.

"Ashlea?"

"Yes?"

"Will everything be alright? I mean, so, so much has happened. What do you think the punishment will be?" A terrifying thought came to mind. *"Will I be sentenced to death?"*

"I doubt it. He knows that you're new to this world. You'll be fine."

I sighed. *"I hope so."*

Trinity and I approached a cabin. It was made of wood, and it was small, but not so small that it was uncomfortable. Saige looked at us.

"Caspian will be here soon to inform you two on your punishment," she informed. I nodded, feeling sick to my stomach. I walked into the cabin, observing the way the logs were stacked. I then grabbed my bag, placing it on the bed. I laid down, dwelling on what had just happened. I was going ot recieve a punishment; that didn't sound too good. And the one determining my punishment is a panther shifter who probably eats birds for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

"Birds; yes. Bird shifters; not usually. Most shifters respect the lives of other shifters. Of course, there are wild shifters that are predators, and don't respect the life of anything or anyone. That's what I was talking to you about yesterday."

Wow. I hadn't even realized that all of this had happened in two mere days. I hadn't even realized how drained of energy I was.

"Alright. I'm gonna sleep for a little."

Sleep came easy, and soon, I was taken back into harsh reality.

"Wake up you two." commanded a voice, and I rose up, heart beating fast. It was the panther shifter, Caspian. I met his gaze, trying to intimidate him. My effort was lost on him, as he showed no signs of being intimidated.

"Follow me." he instructed, and I nodded, obeying. The night sky was overhead, and a cold breeze moved through my feathers. As he walked, I went beside him.

"I have a name, you know." I said to him, glaring.

"Oh. And what is it?"

"Madelyn."

"So Madelyn, why did you go and expose yourself?"

"What was I supposed to do? Live in a tree with a broken wing?"

"You could've healed yourself." he suggested.

"I just found out that I could do that today!" I exclaimed; glaring at him once again.

We reached a large stump, and he walked up to it. Many people and animals sat on logs, chattering excitedly. Caspian shifted, intimidating me once again.

"Madelyn and Trinity, please come up."

I gulped, shivering in fear. I walked up, looking at him.

"These two bird shifters, Madelyn and Trinity, have exposed their wings to humans. They were then tracked down, and I believe that Trinity's parents are in custody, according to shifters that live in the human town."

I looked at Trinity. She looked shocked.

"Trinity." I whispered "Don't worry; we'll find them."

She remained silent.

"I am willing to lessen the punishment of these two girls, since Madelyn is so new to our world, and since they are so young."

I wanted to argue that I wasn't young, but I didn't want to get in more trouble than I was already in. I waited for Caspian to resume speaking.

"We have had a problem with help around here, and we have had fewer shifters to defend our community. I know many of you have been looking for shifters you can pass your knowledge onto."

Caspian looked at Trinity and I.

"You two will be assigned to someone who will teach you."

A/N- Ah, nothing like ending a chapter with dialogue. Madelyn and Trinity's punishment isn't too big, but what about the people in pursuit of her?

Please vote, comment, and share my book around wattpad! I'll see ya in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 11

[image]

I glanced at Trinity, relieved that the punishment wasn't large.

"Aubree, please come up." boomed Caspian. A brown haired woman looking to be around twenty-five strolled up.

"You will be in charge of mentoring Trinity. Please demonstrate your animal form."

She nodded, and I watched as she changed, grayish fur spreading across her body. I stepped backwards as I heard the sound of bones crunching and changing. I trembled for the seemingly millionth time. Ears grew pointed, and a wolfish face glanced at Trinity and I. I wanted to fly away, but I didn't.

Caspian began to speak again. "Aubree, please shift back."

Aubree nodded, and she changed back. I glanced at Trinity and whispered "Wishing you luck."

"Same to you." she replied.

"Aubree, please take Trinity to your cabin and begin training."

Trinity looked at me, and then followed Aubree. I sighed, trying to relax. I gazed out at the crowd, wondering which one would be my mentor.

Caspian began to speak once again, and I listened intently. "Casey, please come up here and demonstrate your animal form."

A blonde, short haired girl walked up. What I saw surprised me. She had the tail and ears of a... lion. I stepped back, almost falling off of the stand. I watched as she changed, fur rippling across her skin. Her bones rearranged, and I could hear it. I wanted to fly away so badly.

"Don't, Madelyn. Caspian assigned you a mentor to help you. This community, they're not salvage. They're just a group of shifters who want to live freely. And they want to help you and Trinity. Let them help you."

"I'm not making any promises, but I'll try. Keyword; try."

I shifted my gaze back onto Casey. At least, where she had been. In her place stood a lioness. She glanced at me, and I stepped back. I tripped, falling off.

"Meant to do that." I announced. Casey seemed to chuckle, and I looked at her.

"Now shift back, Casey. I believe you're startling Madelyn here."

Dang it! He saw my nervousness!

She shifted back, but the lion tail and ears remained.

"Trinity and Madelyn will be taught useful skills that will allow them to contribute to our community of shifters. This is to make up for their exposure of themselves. I believe that this will fade, as do most exposures. This meeting is over."

Casey turned to face me. "Sorry if I frightened you. I guess my animal form is quite frightening for those that don't know me. Were you afraid that I was going to attack you or something?

I nodded, looking at her.

"I can understand. Now, you can head to your cabin. Chances are, your friend will be there.Training won't start until tomorrow, as it's quite late. Get some good sleep; you're going to need it."

I nodded again, pushing off of the ground. I flapped my wings, feeling the cool night air move through them. I spotted the cabin and landed. Sure enough, Trinity was there.

"How was it?" I asked her.

"Good." I replied "I'm heading to bed."

"Same. Goodnight."

I leapt into bed, stretching my new muscles. I let out a yawn before drifting into beautiful, peaceful sleep.

"Madelyn," said a voice "Wake up."

I awoke to see Trinity looking at me.

"I'm up, I'm up." I announced, checking the time on my phone. "And why the heck did you wake me up at six in the morning?"

"Caspian said that training starts at six thirty."

I sighed, getting out of bed. My hair was a wild mess. I ran my fingers through my hair, trying to get through the thick tangles. *Wish I had brought a brush.*

I was able to semi-untangle my hair, and after a meal consisting of a pop-tart and water, I walked out of the cabin. Animals and people walked through the village, conversing with one another.

"Hi Madelyn." said a voice, and I flew up in the air, surprised. Looking down, I saw the face of the Casey.

"You startled me!"

"Sorry." I heard her apologize, "Follow me; it's time for your training."

I landed next to her. "So... why aren't there many shifters here? I'd have thought that older shifters would be teaching me."

"Many years ago, when I was around the age of ten, hunters attacked the village. They killed many, and though we managed to get rid of them, we were without a leader. Caspian, who was fifteen at the time, stepped up and became leader. But, we had to teach ourselves many things that we could not learn from our mentors. That was because our mentors were dead. But, we managed."

"So, that's why he was so upset about the people seeing my wings."

"Seems that way."

"Oh, I got on his bad side, didn't I?"

"Probably. But I bet you can figure out a way to make it up to him."

"I hope so."

"I will teach you how to hunt." Informed Casey.

"But won't the hunting styles between a lion and a bird be different? Besides, I already have someone who has volunteered to teach me."

And with that, I flew off.

"I'm guessing that someone is me?"

"Yep. So, how do I become an eagle or some bird of prey?"

"Just form a picture of one in your mind, and focus on becoming it."

"Alright."

I thought back to my third grade research project. I had researched the red kite. No, not some kite with a string on it, but a type of bird. And since it was pretty much imbedded in my mind, I focused on becoming it. Changes washed over me, and I had transformed.

"Now, watch for movement. Once you spot it, fly to it and catch the prey animal. Good?"

"Yeah."

I watched, my attention unwavering. After a few minutes, I saw movement. Excitement moved through me, and I dove.

I missed, but I tried again. I kept on trying, until a mouse laid limp in my talons.

"Now, what do I do?"

"You can eat it or give it to someone."

I flew down, giving the mouse to a cat shifter before heading back to the cabin. I shifted back, wings going back to their yellow color. I zipped open my bag, unlocking my phone. Luckily, I still had a signal. I checked my news app, and horror overtook me.

The two winged girls were spotted flying into a forest near Haines City, Florida. Two groups are currently looking for them, as they could revolutionize genetic testing.

Oh crap.

A/N- Yep, yeppity yep. I just did that. I'm that fabulous. You may applaud now.

If you want a character in the book, fill out the form:

Name:
Age:
Power:
Appearance:
Species:
(If shifter) animal that they shift into:
Personality:
Other:

I will only accept it if you also put what I did good and what I could improve on in the comment with it. And I will only accept 2 characters.

Anyway, please vote, comment, and I'll see you next chapter!

Chapter 12

What was I going to do? They were looking for us! The safety of the entire community was at stake! I stuffed my phone in my pocket, trying to get my focus off of the information.

But, I could not.

"Calm down, Madelyn."

"How am I supposed to be calm?"

"Just take breaths and go tell Caspian."

"Why would I tell Caspian? Do you know how much trouble I'd get in? Plus, he's most likely already expecting it. It's fine."

At that moment, Trinity walked in.

"Hi, Trinity." I greeted, sighing afterwards.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

"Nothing." I lied, feeling guilty. But, it was my problem. I had gotten myself into this mess, and I didn't want Trinity getting worried.

"You sure?" she questioned "I'm your friend; you can talk to me if you need to."

"I'm gonna go fly, and then I'll tell you," I replied. Walking out of the cabin, I flew up. The sun was setting; a beautiful sight. Streaks of orange and yellow painted the sky, and I flew up more, watching the shifter city seem to shrink beneath me. I didn't know how I had stood it, being stuck on the ground all the time. Sure, I had only been a shifter for a few days, but flying; it's the best thing ever.

I flapped my wings, propelling myself trough the air. I wanted to stay here forever; escape harsh reality. Never have to see the people pursuing me, or my parents. My parents especially. They had kept so, so much from me. And then, I found out. They had attacked me. I continued flying, and I didn't know how long I had been flying. I wanted to escape the bad things that had happened so quickly.

So many things, both good and bad, had happened. Why had it happened to me? I kept on flying; not knowing where I was going. Eventually, I tired and landed on a branch, resting. It had become night, and it was hard to see in the darkness. But, I took comfort in the breezes and the thrill of being beneath the stars. I closed my eyes, trying to relax. A voice snapped me out of my relaxed state.

"Hey, winged-girl!"

I looked down, alarmed. There was a boy, around the age of eleven,

staring up at me. I flapped my wings, flying away. He had seen me! What if he relayed that information to those groups in pursuit of me?

I pulled out my phone, silently praying that I still had service. Nope. Then, a slight bit. Quickly, I typed a message to Trinity.

'Meet me above the camp'

I sent the message and quickly flew to camp. I was exhausted, and I wanted nothing more than to rest. But I couldn't. Trinity; she was my best friend. She needed to know. Plus, she wouldn't punish me. Caspian might. Which is why I wasn't going to tell him, or anyone else, for that matter.

I was a coward. Putting my happiness first, instead of the safety of the shifters. Looking back, I shouldn't have done that. I regret it deeply.

Trinity was above the little village, and I flew up to her.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

"I'll show you," I replied, and opened the news app. "Look."

Wait for it... wait for it....

"They know where we are!" she exclaimed.

"Shhh. I know that. But whatever you do, don't tell Caspian."

"Why shouldn't I? He needs to know!"

"But we'd get in so much trouble? And what if we were sentenced to death?"

"Now that's just stupid. He won't sentence you to death. Exile, possibly."

"Not. Helping."

"Sorry."

Trinity interrupted my conversation with Ashlea. "But he won't. He could've sentenced us to so much more when it first happened, but he didn't; he won't do it this time!"

"You don't know that! And plus, he probably suspected that this was going to happen in the first place! We don't need to tell him!"

"Yes," fired back Trinity "We do!"

"No."

"Yes."

"No."

"Yes."

"No."

"Yes."

"Yes."

"No." said Trinity, then realizing what I had done. "You tricked me, didn't you?"

"And it worked."

At that moment, I heard a voice coming from below us. It was the same boy from minutes ago. How the heck did he get here that quick? I dove down and started yelling at him.

"Get out of here! Don't tell anyone where we are, or so help me I will track you down and rip you limb from limb!"

Turns out, the little boy had sass. "One; I doubt you have enough strength in those light little arms of yours to 'rip me limb from

limb'. And two, my father is the head of WellBorne Science Institute. He's been looking for you; so why wouldn't I tell? And after I tell, you'll be captured. Enjoy your freedom while it lasts, freaks."

And with that, the boy sped off at in-human speed. I raced after him, struggling to catch up. I couldn't lose this freedom; I wouldn't!

"Get... back here... you little... idiot!"

It was like someone had done something to him, and given him this intense speed. His father? Possibly. It was probable. Had they expected that I would try and stop them from giving this information? Most likely.

He was far ahead of me now, and I was flapping my wings as fast as I could. I needed to go faster! I had to! I could hardly see him through the vegetation, but I kept on flying. I was exhausted, but in my mind, it didn't matter. My freedom was much, much more important

Somehow, he wasn't tiring, and over his shoulder, he shouted "We will take everything from you. I've been watching for days. A community of shapeshifters is extrordinary. They'll be captured too. Just you wait."

Not Casey, or Caspian! Or Saige, or any of them! Especially not Caspian! It would break him down and kill him inside! Why must he do this?

"Please... don't." I pleaded, out of breath. "I beg of you!"

"You think I care about the feelings of someone like you? Freaks like yourself are pitiful. "

And with that, he sped away, leaving me there, hopeless.

A/N- Deep, deep trouble there! Amirite? And I saw someone say that I needed a bit more excitement, so here you go. Don't cry; you asked for more excitement and I merely gave it.

So, please comment, vote, and share my book with your friends,

family; even your dog! I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 13

I landed on a tree branch, shock overtaking me. I folded my wings in tight, trying to stop the shivers of fear that were rippling through my body. I looked out. The boy was long gone, and I was feeling hopeless. Why had I been so stupid?

I banged my head against the tree. *Stupid, stupid, stupid!*

"Stop it Madelyn; you're gonna hurt yourself."

I sighed and stopped banging my head. *"Why did this have to happen?"*

"It wouldn't have happened if you had just told Caspian."

I sighed once again, knowing that Ashlea was right. I looked out, trying to see if that boy was still there. He wasn't.

"I know. And I was being stupid. Which explains why I was banging my head against the tree. I'm stupid."

"No, you're not. I've seen many exposures before, and most supernatural don't even last a day. They're captured or killed. But you're still safe, and you can do it. I believe in you. Now, you need to go tell Caspian."

"But what if he exiles me? Or tortures me? What if he traumatizes me in his panther form?"

Horrid thoughts permeated my mind, and I shivered fearfully.

"Caspian's a good leader, and good leaders don't torture. You'll be fine. Exile is a possibility, but you do know what you've done is a major offense, right?"

I sighed. *"Yes, I know. But even if I'm exiled, you'll stick by me, right?"*

"Of course. You're my friend. I'll even teach you how to hunt. But, you need to tell Caspian, no matter what consequences may await you."

"Just give me a few minutes to rest. If you had raced after an incredibly quick eleven-year-old, you'd be tired too."

"Just keep watching. Who knows how quick they could get here."

"Alright."

I watched, but eventually, my mind strayed to other topics. My parents came to mind. Were they working with those people who were after me? What was that science group called? The what-Borne Science something? But they were coming for the community; I had to do something.

I flapped my wings, but then stopped. It took all the energy I had to move them just that little bit. Dang; I must've been going really fast.

"You were. How you managed to keep up with the boy going that fast astonishes me. But you need rest. That's what it looks like to me."

"But what about the community of shifters? Why can't I just heal and go?"

"You can heal wounds, not exhaustion. Just rest."

"Fine."

Sleep came surprisingly quick, and sunrise roused me from my slumber. I could hear screams coming from somewhere, and where they were coming from was quickly realized. The shifter town! Adrenaline rushed through my veins, and I leapt off of the tree branch. My flying was frantic, and I didn't give a crap how loud I was. Trinity, Casey, Caspian, Saige, all of the shifters were in danger!

When I got there, a horrid sight awaited me. The dead body of a cheetah was the first thing I saw. Then, all of the fighting. The body of a black panther was under a blazing tree. Caspian!

I looked, trying to see if he was still breathing. He was. But the crackling flames of the tree grew nearer. I dove towards him, trying to drag the large mass of panther. Smoke clouded the air, and I tried to stay as close to the ground as possible. Through the thick pollution, I could see glowing red light. Fire.

"Caspian," I shouted "Caspian wake up! The town needs you to lead them!"

He let out a cough, and attempted to lift his head. He was too injured to do so, and at that moment, I noticed a large gash that he was bleeding out of.

"How do I heal him? Ashlea, I need to know. He needs to lead them."

"Focus on the wound going away, focus on it healing at a super-accelerated rate."

I placed my hands on the bleeding wound, tuning out the sounds of the raging battle. *Heal,* I thought to myself, *heal. He needs to heal. It's my fault that he's injured, and now, he needs to heal.* I imagined the bloody wound closing, the probably horrid pain going away. As his wounds healed, I grew exhausted. But it was worth it when the wound healed.

Caspian looked at me, looked up, and the shouted "Run!"

I was confused, but I ran away. A net was dropped over him, and he was snarling, spitting profanities. They had captured him. I struggled to see through the flames, struggled to see who had thrown the net. I wouldn't let them hurt the shifter town!

A man clad in white, with a sneer upon his face, strolled in front of me.

"What a wonderful specimen. You will do great for my experiments in genetic testing."

I flew up. "I'm nobody's 'experiment.' And if you think you can capture me just like that; then you better go to a doctor and see what the heck is wrong with you."

"Sass is apparently a problem." I heard him mutter. I glared at him. "As well as defiance. But that can easily be fixed."

"Shut up idiot." I fired back.

I shifted my gaze back to the fighting. It was human versus animal, and the humans had weapons. They were winning. Some were dead, but others were caged. Trinity was in the air, taunting and kicking. Her leg was bloody, a bullet imbedded in it.

"Trinity!" I shouted, looking at the horrid scene below.

"Fight! We have to save them!"

"We're dead if we do! They're either dead or captured." I looked down at the battlefield to see Caspian with a catch pole around his neck.

"Let him go!" I shouted, and then noticed who had captured Caspian. It was that little boy. *Speedy*.

"Never, you mindless freak!"

I dove down, aiming for him. He caught me by my leg, and I struggled to get away.

"Don't fly away, specimen. Father will be pleased at me for catching you two specimen."

Then, a flash flew by, and Speedy lessened his grip. When the flash stopped, I saw it was Trinity.

"Thanks for saving me. But we need to go."

We both flew away, leaving the fiery battlefield. Leaving a leader, and friends. Leaving those who were like us.

A/N- Here, have some tissues. You need them. Sorry.

So, we've reached 100 votes. Dang. Thank you so much! In other news, GWSTB is ranking! Yes, ranking! Thank you so much for your support!

I've got to go, so I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now.

Chapter 14

I kept looking back at the little town. I had let down the shifters. I could've saved them. But it seemed that it was only Trinity and I who had escaped. I sighed. I wanted to curl up in a ball and leave myself to die. I hadn't rescued Caspian. The sight of Caspian's horrified panther face was forever etched in my mind. Hisses, growls, and shrieks echoed in my thoughts.

"I could've saved them. But, I let them down. I let them down!"

"No, you didn't, Madelyn. There was no way you could've rescued all of them. Their weapons were far too powerful."

"Why did that Speedy have to tell them? Why?"

"Some people are just evil-spirited, Madelyn. But know that it's not your fault."

"It is. I could've told Caspian, and he could've prepared. But I didn't tell him, because I'm a coward. A big, fat coward."

"You're not big, fat, or a coward. You're a strong woman that can do anything she puts her mind to, and I believe in you. You'll rescue them; I know you will."

At that moment, a loud yelp ran through the forest. It sounded like a wolf made it. I decided to take a chance.

"Are you a shifter?"

I waited a moment, then, there was a weak "Yes."

"We're coming. Don't attack!"

I glanced at Trinity, and she nodded. "Let's go then."

"Say something so we can hear you!" I shouted.

"I am right now." It was coming from in front of me. I landed to see a silvery furred wolf with a gash on her side.

"Thank you so much," she whispered "The humans came, and they attacked me. I was barely able to get away."

"Just stay still." I whispered back "I'm going to heal you."

I placed my hand on her wound, some of the blood getting on it. *I need to wash my hands later.*

The wound began to close, first becoming a scab, then healing. Fur grew in; it was like the wound had never been there. The wolf shifter was healed, but I was exhausted. My stomach growled, and my mouth was like a desert. I pulled a few dollars out of my pocket, then placed it in front of the wolf shifter.

"Shift into your human form and then buy something to eat and a bottle of water. It doesn't have to taste good; it just needs to be cheap."

"But Madelyn," began Trinity "Don't we have bags of foo..."

"Yes, we left them at the town. I still have my phone, but that's the only thing I have. We don't have any food."

"I'll go and get some food." said the wolf shifter, assuming her

human form. "What's your name? I'm Stella."

"I'm Madelyn," I replied, then pointed at Trinity "And that's Trinity."

"It's nice to meet you two. And thank you, Madelyn, for healing me. I might've died if it weren't for you."

"No problem. And thanks for getting the food. Trinity and I can't go out in public because of our wings."

Stella walked off, and I laid there. Exhaustion wanted my to fall asleep, but hunger wanted me to stay awake, to wait for food. So I waited. My stomach growled, and I started counting. One; when is she gonna get here? Two; I'm so dang hungry. Three; I need to rest. Four; but I don't want to. FIve; I need to eat. Six; I need sleep.

But here's something I've learned. If you don't want to fall asleep and then close your eyes, you're going to fall asleep. So naturally, I fell asleep.

"Hi Madelyn." said a voice, and I opened my eyes. It was Stella. Memories of the day flashed in my mind, and I wished I could go back to the happiness that was sleep. I sighed, regretting what had happened.

"Hey Stella. What did you get?"

"A couple of granola bars and a bottled water."

"Thank you so much."

"It's no problem."

Stella passed me a granola bar and the bottle of water. Tearing the wrapper off, I quickly devoured the granola bar. I was still slightly hungry, but who knew how long we'd be out here? I then took a few sips from the water bottle, the cool water soothing my parched throat. I put the lid back on.

"Should we get moving?" I asked, "I'm feeling better now."

Trinity looked at me. "I'll finish eating and then we can go."

"Alright." I removed my phone from my pocket, tapping on the news app. An article title caught my eye."

Human to Animal Metamorphosis Possible

My stomach did a flip. They had sent it to the news! My heart pounded rapidly, and I shivered fearfully. I tapped on the article and began to read it.

While in pursuit of the two winged girls; a small group of people that were able to quickly metamorphosize from human to animal were discovered. We interviewed Phred WellBorne, the one in charge of discovering these facinating new species.

Rose Jonsen: So Phred, how did you discover these metamorphosizers?

Phred WellBorne: My son, Michel, went missing for a few days. I had people looking for him, and eventually, he came back. He told me of people who were able to change from their human selves into animals, and back. He also said that the winged girls were among them. I was sceptical at first; but when I saw it, I took several specimen back to WellBorne Science Institute, which is where I work.

RJ: And what do you plan to do with these facinating creatures?

PW: I plan to analyze their DNA and figure out just how they shift, and why these odd mutations occur. This is revolutionary in the field of genetics.

I turned off my phone right then and there. As I slipped my phone back into my pocket, I felt nervous. I bit at my nails, trembling.

"I'm gonna fly for a little." I told Trinity and Stella. I took off, trying to forget what I had just read.

A/N- Yes, I know, da feels. I said in a comment that I was taking you to the land of feels! Anyway, look at the picture of Madelyn! I haz fanart! Well, I requested for someone to draw it, but it counts!

Also, I've entered Girl who Speaks to Birds in the Wattys! Please share this with your friends and family; it would be amazing if I could win somehow! Anyway, I've gotta go. I'll see ya in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 15

I flew up, up, up. Birds let out their calls, and I listened, trying to drown my fear in the noise. I flapped my wings rapidly, nervous energy coursing through my veins. I heard the sound of wind as I went faster and faster.

"Slow down, Madelyn. And while you're at it, calm down."

"How am I supposed to be calm? This must be torture for Caspian. You and I both know what he went through!" I sighed. *"This is all my fault. I should've told Caspian, but I didn't. I was afraid. I made assumptions and kept the precious information from him."*

I recalled my sixth-grade English teacher's words. *Don't assume anything unless you're trying to prove that you're a bonehead.* How those words came and bit me in the butt.

"You're not a bonehead, Madelyn."

"I know. It was just something that one of my teachers said. Whenever a student assumed something, she'd say that. I mean, it's been five years since she's been my teacher, but that's what comes to mind when I think about that specific teacher."

"Do you think about your teachers a lot?"

"Only the ones that have made a huge impact on me. I mean, all of them have, giving me knowledge and all. But the ones that impact me emotionally are the ones I remember. If you think about it, teachers shape us a lot. As of now, people go to school for seven or eight hours. That's a lot of time spent with the teachers and a lot of getting to know each other."

"You think about a lot of stuff, don't you."

"How can I not, when one miniscule decision can through the lives of many into turmoil? I should have been wiser in the decisions I made. And then there are the things I worry about, like diseases, getting run over, food poisoning, rabid animals. And that's only a few."

"There are many things to be afraid of in life. They differ from person to person. But there are also the things that are glorious and beautiful, the things we should embrace. Like family."

"Do you have any family?"

"No. Well, not exactly. A girl was about to die. Her body was barely alive, but her soul had left. I was able to save her, and I inhabited her body, living out the life she would've had. I guess it was a little selfish and all."

"If you think about it, it was being selfless. Imagine the suffering the family would've been put through."

"I guess so. And the life I lived there; it wasn't like an actual family. At the beginning of time, all of the spirits were created. Millions of shifter spirits, being able to be gifted onto an otherwise normal person. And if your parents were shifters, you received once right after birth. And then, sometimes spirits choose a person with no shifter bloodline. Like I did with you. But shifter spirits don't have families."

"Aren't we family?"

"I guess you could say that, but it's stronger than family bonds would be. The bond between shifter spirit and person is unbreakable. Then, when a person with a shifter spirit dies, they go to the spirit realm. And they have certain animal features, depending on which shifter spirit they had."

"You sure do know a lot about this stuff."

"I experienced it. And besides, even if I hadn't, I was on the shifter council. We had to know our own history."

I flew on, feeling the cool wind hit my face as I flew by, calmer. I hadn't forgotten what I had read, but I was calmer, and it had helped to get my mind off of the dreadful thought for a while. I looked down, seeing the trees move in the wind. The sound of leaves rustling had sort of a calming effect, and I felt much, much better. I flapped my wings, soaring through the sky. I decided to take a risk. I needed to find where that WellBorne Science Institute. Maybe, if I could rescue them, it'd make up.

"You can't go alone, Madelyn. Go get Trinity and Stella. There's safety in numbers."

"But what if they don't want to?"

"Shifters need to stick together. They won't let you go alone. They might be a little reluculant at first, but they care about you; I can tell."

I sighed. *"Alright."*

I turned around, heading back to where Trinity and Stella were. I looked, trying to see through the undergrowth. I heard them discussing a few things, and I landed behind Trinity.

"I have an idea."

"Is it to rescue the shifters or something?" asked Stella.

"How did you know?" I asked.

"Lucky guess? Just kidding; I heard you mumbling to yourself as you came here."

"Can we?" I asked, staring at her.

"I don't know." began Trinity "It's awfully risky."

"Well, that's what's we've been doing lately. Let's continue the streak. I'm going. If you want to come with me, go ahead."

I pushed off of the ground, going up. I was headed towards the town. I'd be able to get a good view from the air. I heard the flapping of wings behind me, and looked. It was Trinity.

"You came!" I exclaimed, shocked.

"I couldn't let you get captured. You need someone the help you. And if we're captured, we're in it together."

"Did Stella come?" I asked.

"Yeah. She's right below you, if you hadn't noticed."

I looked down to see a silver wolf running - Stella.

"Thanks for coming, Stella." I thanked, extremely grateful.

"No problem." replied Stella "Shifters stick together."

"Told ya."

"Yeah, yeah. I didn't know then. And plus, this is risky. You saw how they were a bit reluctant."

I focused back on finding that science lab. I flapped my wings, going higher. We had entered the town now, and I had to stay out of sight. Then, we had found our lead. We were above a parking lot, and two men were carrying cart. On top of it was an unusually large crate. There was a silhouette of a person in the crate. And that person had wings.

A/N- Sorry it was out a little later than usual. But it was worth the wait, wasn't it? Also, I have a challenge. If you can advertise my book on social media sites and can pm me proof, you get a mention in an A/N of an upcoming chapter and a dedication. I'm gonna try and win a watty, and it would be amazing if I could. Now, here's a little tidbit of info to get you interested and coming up with ideas.

Look down if you don't wanna know.

The person in the cage is male and around the age of Madelyn.

Did I just throw a love interest in? I guess I did.

Anyway, please comment, vote, and I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now!

P.S- The media is a cover someone made me. I'm not using it, but I decided to put it in the media. worldgirlalways made it for me.

Chapter 16

I stayed behind, still in the air. They were moving him into a building. And that building just so happened to be WellBorne Science Institute. I couldn't believe my luck! Well, not his luck, but it would be. I would set everyone free. It would make up for them being captured. And plus, I couldn't let them go through all that pain. In most books with this sort of stuff, the experiments were

painful. I didn't know if it was real or not, but I couldn't take that chance.

I chuckled, remembering the Max Ride books. Dang, how unrealistic those books were. How the heck did they hide fourteen-foot wings under their clothes? And didn't they need to stretch their wings every so often?

I focused my attention back on the building. They had stopped at the building, and one of the men was holding a key. *Why does he need a key if there's no door?* I watched as he (stupidly) poked at the wall. Well, it seemed stupid at the time. Moments later, it didn't seem so stupid. A door revealed itself, and they walked in. I (stupidly) followed. Trinity was behind me, but the door closed before Stella could get in. At least Trinity was with me. Screams and squeals echoed through the dark hallway. I glanced at one of the cages and shuddered in horror.

A creature with the body of a wolf and the head of a person growled at me, and I flew as high up as the ceiling allowed. Many creatures were in cages. I saw an anthropomorphic turtle, a person with the lower body of a snake... and those weren't even the frightening ones! What day was it? Scare the crap out of a bird shifter day? It seemed that way.

A cold breeze ran through the hall, and I shuddered. Not just from the cold, but from the fear. I trailed behind them, trying to match the pace of my flaps with their footsteps. Soon, we reached a more illuminated room, and it was full of the shifters. A black panther was laying down, and I recognized him immediately. It was Caspian. But I would have to wait for the people to leave before I could free them. I glanced at all of the shifters, their focus was on me. I couldn't reassure them that everything was going to be alright. Partially because the people would hear. And partially because I wasn't that confident that everything was going to be alright.

The sheet covering the cage was removed, and I saw the bird shifter. He had the wings of some sort of songbird. They were brown and white, and so were his tail feathers. He glanced at me with black eyes; the eyes of a bird.

All of a sudden, the men stopped, but I was still flapping. They heard me. They spun around, and I flew off. But I thought that being able to fly away would save me from being captured. But, it didn't. A net was thrown over me, and as I glanced to my right, I saw that Trinity had met the same fate.

"Little winged girls came to save their little friends, eh? Well, it's not happening. And Phred will be pleased to know that we captured you. He's had people searching for days. And to think, you were this close all along!" He chuckled in a way that made me feel sick.

I tried to get out of the netting but only succeeded in tangling myself even more. And the holes in the netting were far too miniscule for a canary to slip through.

"You're trapped."

"Yeah. In other obvious news, the sun rose this morning."

"Ha ha, very funny. But this could be used as an advantage. Gain allies and regain the trust of the town, then make a big escape."

"But when the fighting happened, all of the shifters couldn't beat those scientists."

"But they've captured many more shifters than the ones at the shifter town. Didn't you notice? There were maybe forty at the shifter town. Here, there's well over a hundred shifters!"

I sighed, then replied with *"Alright."*

At that moment, a brown haired man strolled in, his face in an evil sneer.

"Well well," he began "What do we have here? The two winged girls? Oh yes, we do. You two little mutants have been hard to catch. We had thought you were deep in the woods. And to think that one of my men was able to bring you down just like that. He'll be getting a raise, no doubt about that. But what, oh what are we going to do with you?"

"Let us all free?" I replied, knowing what the answer would be. Still, a bird-shifter can hope.

"And why would I do such a thing to the interesting specimen that I've captured?" he turned to the man who had captured me. "Take her to section 40-B."

The man nodded, then took the netting off. He was holding a dog cage. Oh no he wasn't. I tried to fly away, but he had me pinned down with surprisingly strong arms. I was shoved into the crate, and I screamed, demanding that I be let go. He didn't, but it made me feel a little better knowing that I was irritating them. It's those small things in life.

My cage was set on top of two other cages, and that boy's cage was on my left. Looking to my right, I saw Trinity.

"I'm sorry Trinity. We should've been more careful."

"It's alright." she replied, then said the next part in a whisper "And Stella is still outside. Maybe she'll get some backup."

I sighed, looking at the white room full of cages. They were full of people who had animal features while human.

"So there's a special room for everyone with the extra features. How heavily guarded do you think it is?"

"From what I've seen, it's very well guarded." said a voice. I looked to my left and saw the boy.

"I didn't say that aloud, did I?" I asked.

"No. And sorry if I startled you. I can read minds, that's the gift I was given. I'm Tyler."

A/N- We've got a name for the lov- nope, not gonna say it. Anyone gonna come up with a ship name? :3

Anyway, the contest is still going on, so pm me proof of advertising it. I'd be overjoyed if I won the wattys.

Please comment, vote, share it with your friends, and I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 17

"I'm Madelyn." I replied.

"I know. And I know what happened."

I suddenly felt quite invaded. "Don't you dare go searching through my mind."

He smirked. "But there's so much I don't know about you."

"Ashlea, how do I stop crazy here from invading my mind?"

"I heard that."

"Just imagine a wall covering your thoughts and memories."

"So you do know. May I ask how?"

"I'll tell you once that Tyler stops reading your mind."

"Alrighty then."

I focused on an image of a brick wall. I imagined it wrapping around my mind, guarding my thoughts, emotions, and feeling from any prying eyes.

"Did it it work?" I asked him. He nodded.

"Now are you going to tell me?"

"Long story short, I was a shifter spirit for a boy and this demented guy with powers was trying to find out how he could shift. I had to figure it out myself."

"Okay."

I sighed, looking out through the wire of the cage. Scientists clad in white strolled through the hallways, taking notes as they passed shifter after shifter. I glared at them, then looked away.

"Those jerks."

"Indeed."

My stomach growled hungrily, probably from all the flying that I had done. It had taken a lot out of me. I wanted to sleep, but who knew what those scientists would do while I was sleeping? Even though I knew it would tempt me to sleep, I was cold, so I wrapped my wings around me. I glanced at Trinity, who had done the same.

"I hate this." I muttered "Why do they want to do this to us?"

"Probably because they think we're freaks of nature." said a voice behind me, and I knew it was Tyler. I looked behind myself to look at him.

"Do you have a plan to get us out of this mess, Tyler? If not, then I'd keep my mouth shut if I were you. I'm not exactly pleased at our current situation."

I heard him mutter "Well, it's your fault you're in this mess. Actually, it's your fault all of the shifters are in this mess."

I resisted the urge to shift into a hummingbird, open his cage and punch the crap out of him. Wait...

I had just gotten an idea.

Sadly, I couldn't put my plan into action, as those scientists were quickly approaching my cage. They took notes quickly, and stopped at Tyler's cage. I watched as they scrawled information in those notebooks of theirs. Then they walked over to my cage.

"Madelyn Ruth," began one of the men. How did they even know my name? "Follow us, it is time for your interrogation."

My stomach did a flip. "I-interrogation?"

He nodded, opening the cage door. I stepped out, trembling in fear. He shoved me forward, and I could see a tazer in his hand. I kept looking behind myself, fearful that painful waves of electricity would overtake me. I saw faces looking desperately through their cages, and I shivered in fear. I bit at my nails; they were extremely short. Soon, we reached a white room.

"Sit down." he commanded. I nodded, sitting down.

I trembled, and waves of dominance radiated from the man. He was not one to be messed with; I could tell.

"So, Mrs. Ruth," he began in a cruel, tone "How do you have those wings of yours?"

"Should I tell him?"

*"**No. Pretend you don't know.**"*

"I-I don't know sir. O-one day I just t-turned into a c-canary, a-and when I t-turned back, I-I was like this."

*"**Good fake stuttering.**"*

"Thanks."

After a brief moment or two of silence, the man spoke again, his loud voice echoing through the room. "Freak, you don't fool me! **Tell me how you transform!**"

To be honest, I didn't know everything there was to know about shifting. All I knew was; imagine the bird, I become it. But I did know that much, and I took all my self-control not to shout at him 'I'll never tell!'

Thank goodness I didn't. Though it pained me to do it, I kept my act of playing dumb.

"S-sir, I don't know. I-I'm sorry. If I knew, I'd tell you. P-please don't h-hurt me."

He grabbed his tazer, aiming it at me. "I swear if you don't tell me, I will use this on you."

I was about to tell him when Ashlea took control.

"Never." she made me say.

"Ashlea, stop it."

"Madelyn, stop it. Do you really want your cowardice to spell death for all the shifters? Shush."

I mentally sighed, watching what was going on.

"Oh, but that implies that you know. Tell me. Now."

"Never." snarled Ashlea.

The man used the tazer. I didn't feel the pain, but chances were, Ashlea had.

"Are you alright?" I asked.

After a few moments, Ashlea replied ***"Yeah, I'm fine. You know what they say; pain is weakness leaving the body."***

"Who said that?"

"Don't know. Don't care."

"Tell me, you freak, and punishment will not be given. You know, so tell me. Now."

"Why would I tell you, you sorry excuse for a person?" snarled Ashlea.

Another shot of the tazer was sent through my body, but I did not feel it.

The question was repeated again and again, and more shocks were sent through my body. Honestly, I was surprised he hadn't killed me yet.

"He's still hoping that he can get the answer out of you. At least, that's my guess, and the most probable answer."

"Ashlea, it's been hours. When can I have control back?"

"After interrogation is over. I can't risk the secrets being revealed. Imagine how chaotic the world would be if the humans learned that magic exists."

I mentally sighed for the millionth time that afternoon. *"Alright."*

Eventually, he grew tired of not getting answers.

"More interrogation tomorrow. Back to your cage."

Control was given back to me, and it felt so good to be able to move on my own again. They took me back to my cage, where many hopeless faces awaited me. Not Tyler or Trinity's, but pretty much everyone else.

"We'll get everyone out of here. Just wait."

A/N- I'm going to be updating daily, but on sunday, NO UPDATE TIME begins. That's because I'm going on vacation, and while I'll have my laptop, I'm not entirely sure they have wifi. If they do, then updates will be consistent like always. If not, then you're going to have to wait. Sorry. :3

Also, thanks for the votes and comments! I appreciate them!

I've got to go, but I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 18

When once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return. ~Leonardo Da Vinci

—

I sat in my cage, looking out. I kept checking regularly to make sure that the mind-wall was still up. I was going to get out, and get everyone else out. It would just have to wait until night. Under the cover of night, I could easily slip out of the science institute.

"Trinity." I whispered in a soft tone "We're getting out of here. Tonight."

"But how? These cages have locks, you know."

"Remember, I can shift into any bird."

"Right. So, what's the plan?"

"I shift into a hummingbird, get out of the cage, shift back, unlock everyone's cages, we escape."

"And we're doing this tonight?""

I nodded, then went back to thinking. The guards could be patrolling, but I could fly, they couldn't.

"That didn't stop them earlier."

"But if we can make an escape without them seeing, then it won't come to that."

"Good point. And are you sure that this is going to work? That's a lot of unlatching cages, and chances are, it'll be loud."

"I have to do this. I wouldn't have to if I had just told Caspian, but I have to pay the price."

"You speak with determination. And if you're determined, you can do anything. I believe in you, Madelyn."

"Thanks, Ashlea."

"But do be aware that you may have to come back for some of the shifters. But, if you're silent enough, you can get everyone out. Be careful, alright?"

"Alright, I will."

Cold permeated the room, and I wrapped my wings around me. It was freezing, and I had a feeling that it would only become more frigid during the night.

"I might just have to do a snowy owl for some of the time. Those birds are good in cold weather, right?"

"Yeah. And my theory on why they're turning up the cold is to discourage any escape attempts."

"They don't know the determination running through us. We will prevail."

"Indeed. When one's mind is set on something, there's no stopping them. Try and get some rest; I'll wake you up when it's night."

"How will you know?"

"I'll know."

I sighed; it wasn't exactly reassuring, but I closed my eyes and let sleep overtake me. I dreamt of being free, being away from this horrid place. I dreamt of a future in which shifters were respected and treated like everyone else. I didn't know when it was, but I knew that it would be years away. Still, I enjoyed it.

Sad it is, how dreams are an escape, but after they're done, you're quickly plunged back into harsh rea

"Madelyn... Madelyn."

"I'm up. I was having a good dream, though."

"Well, you can tell me about it later. For now, get everyone out of here."

I imagined a hummingbird small enough to fit through the cracks,

and changes overtook me. Patterns of feathers rippled across my skin. Then, they protruded from my skin, and my wings merged with my arms. I grew smaller, shrinking, shrinking, shrinking. I was tiny. And the best part of that was that I was small enough to escape this horrid place. I flapped my tiny wings rapidly, and they were a blur. IT was fascinating, being this small, but I had no time to truly observe it. I would have to move fast if I were to rescue every shifter. I flew through the cage. It was a tight fit, but it worked. I then shifted back, and opened Trinity's cage.

It was a semi-complex lock that was incapable of being opened from the inside. I tapped Trinity, and she woke.

"Come on," I said "Help me get everyone out."

She stepped out silently. The cage then rattled slightly, but not enough for anyone in the other rooms to hear. I held my finger to my mouth, then opened Tyler's cage. I nudged him, and his eyes snapped open.

"Huh?"

"We're getting out. Be quiet." I whispered. As he stepped out, I saw that his legs were that of a bird's. I looked away, trying not to show him that I had seen. Not out of love or anything. Just respect.

"Sure, sure."

"Shush, Ashlea. I'm trying to focus."

I unlocked the cage in front of me, a girl with the tail of a squirrel. I then did the cages next to her's, while Trinity and Tyler did the top rows. They moved through the halls silently, and I was moving on to the other side of the hall when a voice echoed through the hallway.

"Stop!"

I spun around to see the man who had tazed me this morning.

"You," I said in an angry tone "Let us go."

Though I tried not to show it, I was absolutely terrified. My legs shaked wildly, and I tried to calm myself. In, out. In, out, I breathed, trying to relax. I could fly; they couldn't. I was clearly at advantage. Or, so I tried to tell myself.

"Like I'd do that." he fired back, tazer in his right hand. In his left was a dart gun looking strangely like one of those ones in movies. Then, I recognized it. It was one of those ones designed to knock people or animals out. There was no time to rescue everyone else.

"RUN!" I shouted, taking to the air. In midair, I shifted into a canary. I was small enough that only a person with expert aim could shoot me.

I didn't count on there actually being a person with such perfect aim.

A brown, scruffy haired man stepped out, dart gun in hand. It was that Phred. Oh no. This was bad. He aimed at me, and I flew frantically, up, down, left, right. A dart was fired, a miniscule one, and I doubted that it would hit me.

It did.

I felt sleep try and overtake me, trying to draw me in. But I couldn't. I tried to stay awake, tried to fight. But I couldn't. I landed, everything going black.

A/N- Anyone wondering about the quote? Well, from now on, I'm adding quotes relating to the book to the begining to the chapter. I got the idea from another wattpad book, and I decided to try it. Should I keep on doing it? Say in the comments.

Also, how did you like this chapter? Tell me that in the comments as well!

I've got to go, but I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 19

The human bird shall take his first flight, filling the world with amazement, all writings with his fame, and bringing eternal glory to the nest whence he sprang.

-Leonardo Da Vinci

———

My eyes snapped open. I was in a white room, trapped in a bird cage. I was still shifted, and the events of the night before roared back to me. I looked all around frantically, but there was nobody near.

"Calm down, Madelyn. Just be calm - we'll find a way out of here."

"But how? If I shift back - well , I can't - I'm in this tiny cage! And what about the others? Oh, this is bad."

I tried to get through the cage, but I couldn't. The gaps were miniscule; not even a hummingbird could fit through them!

"Just wait until they get back. Then, make a run for it."

"But what about the others?"

"You can come back for them. But it's important that you leave quickly. There's a slim chance that they've told many people, and your parents may come to capture you if that happened."

My parents. A sickening feeling filled my stomach. Memories of their attack rushed into my mind.

"But what are they chances that they'll come here?" I asked, trying to calm myself.

"If they know you're here, then they're large chances."

At that moment, a man strolled into the room. One hand held a tazer, and the other held a clipboard. He walked towards me.

"Well well," he said, and I glared at him "Looks like the little freak is awake."

I couldn't reply, as I was shifted, but I shot him a glare full of hate.

"Stop with those glares; it's not very polite." he said as he took notes. I sighed, then thought of a to irritate him. He couldn't observe me if he couldn't see me. I shifted into a hummingbird, then darted throughout the cage. Sure enough, he let out a frustrated growl. I mentally grinned. At least he was mad.

"You're not going anywhere. This is where you will stay unless you are being tested on. That's what you get for trying to escape. That and starting a riot. Some of them even escaped! So this is your punishment."

"Uhm... Ashlea? How am I supposed to get out of this mess?"

"Like he said; some of the shifters escaped. And they have you to thank for it. They'll come back and rescue you; I know it."

"But what if they fail... like I did?"

"You were unprepared, and it was just you and Trinity. But it sounds to me that more that just a few shifters escaped. And they'll probably be better prepared. Remember; shifters stick together. Just remember that, and you'll be fine."

"Ashlea, so much has happened in these past few days. And it's startling. I mean, who would've known that shapeshifters exist? It's kind of overwhelming, you know? It's cool, but overwhelming."

"Look at it this way; you're taking it a lot better than the rest of the world."

"I guess so. But look at how much chaos occurred. Answer this honestly; would everything be better for everybody if I had never found you, and I had never become a shifter?"

"Sure, bad things have come from it happening, but there's so much more good. It would've come out anyway; people were bound to find out. Even if you hadn't become a shifter. It's actually good that it happened this early on. If they had more advanced weapons, there would've been many fatalities."

"But there are so many shifters captured! And it's very possible that they'll be put through a fate worse than death!" I sighed, glancing at the man observing me. *"This is all my fault."*

"No, it isn't. Most young people make stupid decisions. What matters is that we learn from them, and use the experience to become better. Just trust me."

"I trust you. But I don't trust these scientists, and I don't trust myself. I threw all the shifters into this horrid chaos, and I need to fix it. Even if it kills me."

"You don't have to do it alone, Madelyn. And even if you had nobody else to support you, I would. Trust yourself, trust your friends and allies, and trust that everything will be alright."

The man began to speak. "Well, freak, it looks like my shift is up. The unlucky person in charge of watching you for the next two hours will be here in a few minutes. Don't go anywhere."

It wasn't like I could; I was stuck in this cold cage with no way out. Still, I waited, staring at the door. I shifted back into a canary, bored of flying about. I perched on the little bar. Then, a man walked in, a black mask covering all but his eyes and mouth. He covered the cage with a black sheet, and darkness overtook the cage. I shivered fearfully, trying to relax.

"Who is it?" I asked.

"I don't know. Maybe one of the escaped shifters came to rescue you. But what I don't know is how they managed to secure a job so quickly. My guess is that they didn't and they just snuck in."

The idea hadn't even occured to me. That was possible.

"Hey Ashlea," I began *"Aren't shifters supposed to be able to communicate with other shifters no matter what form they're in?"*

"Yes. If they're a shifter, they should be able to understand and communicate with you."

I decided to try. "Who is this?"

I didn't hear a reply, but I did hear an oddly familiar laugh. But it had a different tone to it; a tone that was malicious. I shuddered.

"...Ashlea?"

"Don't worry; they're probably just doing an act so that they can get you out of here."

But she didn't sound all that sure of herself. I shuddered as the cage rattled, and I heard the sound of the car roaring to life. I doubted that any of the shifters had a car; they lived in the wild! I tried to talk to them; even if it was a shifter - which I was now doubting - they wouldn't have to use an act anymore.

"Puzzled, aren't you." said a familiar voice "Allow me to clear everything up."

The sheet was pulled off, and what awaited me was shocking.

I was staring at the face of my dad.

A/N- Yes, I just did that. Sorry! :3

So, this is the last update until Thursday (unless I can get wifi access). And I'm leaving you on this major cliffie. :3.

Please comment, vote, share this with your friends and I'll see ya in the comments! Bye for now!

-Pride_Heart

Chapter 20

Be like the bird who, pausing in her flight awhile on boughs too slight, feels them give way beneath her, and yet sings, knowing she hath wings.

~Victor Hugo

_____

Fear clawed its way up inside me as I stared into those eyes. Those eyes that belonged to the father that I had spent so much time with; had created so many memories with.

And he had betrayed me. He had attacked me and I had hardly gotten out! I wanted to fly away, but the many-holed cage from the institute prevented that.

"I see you've escaped our clutches just to fall into another's." he began "You are an unwise little shifter."

So, what was he going to do? I shivered as he stared at me, trying to think happy thoughts.

"Normally, we'd execute shifters that fall into our clutches. But you see, shifters like yourself are unusual. So, the council voted to keep you alive if you agree to work for us. Surely someone inheriting the wisdom of your mother and I would agree to the deal. I will give you the ten minutes until we arrive at the center to decide. If your answer is not yes, then we will kill you in the most painful way possible."

Way to persuade, Dad. Go you. Sense the sarcasm in my thoughts. I glared at him, and he sent a cold, hard stare my way. Well, I wouldn't have to stay long. If I agreed to his deal, maybe I could just try and dodge the bullets and fly away. I looked at my father

again; he was still glaring, but now he was holding a tazer to the cage as he drove.

"Nice to know he cares in his own demented way."

"Sarcasm, I presume?"

"Pretty much."

"Just accept the deal. You know, those places may have those impressive weapons, but they're mostly just prototypes. And from what I've heard, tunneling underneath the force-field is fairly easy. Sure, that was four years ago, but still."

"They have a force-field?"

"Yeah."

"And here I was, thinking I could just fly away."

"I doubt they'd make it that easy. They want to use some of the shifters as slaves, and you can imagine how ticked off they'd be if they escaped."

"Yeah. So, what do I do? Agree to the deal and eventually escape?"

"Yes. Just try and calm down until you arrive."

She said try. So I tried. I failed.

I trembled as the car slowed. But we weren't in a garage or anything like that. He looked back at me and chuckled, most likely at my puzzled expression. He grabbed the remote from the seat beside him and pressed a button. Out of nowhere, a shimmering wall appeared then disapeared, and I felt the car move forward. He must've disabled the force-field, I realized.

Soon, the car slowed to a halt, and I heard the sound of the car door opening. The cage rattled, and I had to hold on tight as my father grabbed my cage. I shivered, knowing what I had to do. I looked through the miniscule holes in the cage, watching as I was brought into a white, intimidating building. I looked at my father, begging

him with my eyes to set me free. He took no notice of my non-verbal pleads.

The door opened, and I was plunged into darkness. I could see the very faint outline of a person just a few steps away.

"Mr. Ruth," he said "Do you have the bird shifter?"

"Yes, Mr. Jones," I heard my father say "Where shall I place it?"

Excuse me, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm not an it. I wanted to shout, but figured that it would only result in myself looking stupid.

"On the table, Mr. Ruth. I will handle the rest."

The cage shook as I was placed on the table, and I could hear the footsteps of my father leaving the room. Well thanks Dad. Way to be a good parent. Leave my alone in here with a stranger. I sighed. This was just great.

"You'll be fine, Madelyn."

I looked at the shadowy figure drawing closer, trembling fearfully.

"Hello, bird shifter." the figure said in a raspy voice.

I trembled, and the man spoke again. "Submit to the hunter society, and you shall live. If you do not, you shall die in the most painful way that my glorious society has devised. Unshift, and tell me your decision. And if you have any plans of escape, extinguish them. There is no way out of here for you."

He unlatched the cage and grabbed me. He glared into my eyes, and I shook, terrified. He grinned twistedly, and I fought the urge to glare at him. He set me down and commanded me to unshift. Me, being the terrified bird-shifter I was, unshifted.

"If you try to escape, I'll break every bone in your wings."

Sorry to break it to you little guy, but I can heal. So ha. I didn't say it aloud, just in case he had some way to disable it, but I sure was

thinking it. I nodded.

"What is your decision?" he asked, giving me a cold, hard stare.

"I will submit." I replied, though it pained me to say that.

"Wise decision. Now, I will retrieve the collar. Stay here, or I will punish you myself."

He walked off, and I looked - well, tried to look - through the darkness. Moments later, he came back and snapped a dog collar on my neck. Then, he put a leash on and started tugging on it, taking me out of the building. Then, he started leading me to horse stables, and opened the door.

"Your working will start tomorrow. Now, I've got to fill out some of the information. Trying to escape will lead to punishment." he growled raspily, and I nodded. He undid the leash and shoved me into the stable. It stunk, but I tried to ignore it.

"This is just great."

"Just be patient. You'll get out of here soon."

"They're jerks. I mean, a collar! A leash!"

"Obey them. I mean, you don't have to like it, but it's better than the alternative."

"Alright. I'll do it. But I sure as heck won't like it."

A/N- Sorry for not updating yesterday, there was a WiFi outage and I couldn't type. But here's the update! Please comment, vote, and I'll see you next chapter! Bye for now!

Chapter 21

Some birds are not meant to be caged, that's all. Their feathers are too bright, their songs too sweet and wild. So you let them go, or when you open the cage to feed them they somehow fly out past you. And the part of you that knows it was wrong to imprison them in the first place rejoices, but still, the place where you live is that much more drab and empty for their departure.

~Stephen King

_____

I paced anxiously in the cramped space - something that is not easy to do - shivering fearfully. I mean, I knew it was the only way to stay alive, but still, a collar. A freaking collar. Lucky me.

"Stop with the pity party, Madelyn."

"I'm trying. But minds tend to wander when there's nothing to do."

"Then try and sleep. You'll have a better outlook on the current situation in the morning."

I laid down, cold wind moving through the stall. I shivered, covering myself with my wings. I hoped that sleep would come, and eventually, it did. Unfortunately, I was awakened from the wondrous sleep world.

I looked at the source of the light. It was my father, who was holding a bronze pole in his right hand. In his left, he was holding a leash. Looks like the being treated like a dog is a constant. He attached it to the collar and started dragging me. I was still shocked. My father, the one who had cared for me all my life, was dragging me by the leash. Like a dog. A dog! He kept looking behind himself, looking at me. Because I was supposed to be so obedient and stay right behind him. Sure, sure.

"Madelyn, be careful. From what I've heard, punishment can be various forms of torture."

A question came to me after a few minutes.

"Wait. Did you know that this place was here?"

"No. Many centers nearly identical to this one are all over the world. There are many ones that are larger than this one, however. That's because they have more shifters there."

"Has anyone ever tried to stop the hunters?"

"Many times, actually."

"Apparently, they failed."

"Yes. But one small center was destroyed seven years ago when all the shifters worked together. But it was not heavily guarded; it was easily destroyed. It'd be much harder to destroy this place."

Ashlea had just given me hope to cling to.

"You will harvest the fruit from these trees, and dispose of the over-ripe fruits. If I see a single fruit in an incorrect spot, you will receive punishment." instructed my father, snapping me out of my thoughts.

"Yes, Dad." I said with a sigh.

"One more thing; you will call me Mr. Ruth. I hope you enjoyed being free; cause that's over."

And with that, he walked off. How could he change so quickly? He

used to be so caring and loving. But he's changed.

"Perhaps he's always been this way. Certain things are very easily hidden, if you know how to cover up your trail with lies and deceit. "

"So you're saying that he's lied to me all my life?"

"It's very possible."

"But he's my dad!"

"There's such a thing as bad parenting, you know. Not trying to be harsh; I'm just telling it like it is."

I sighed and grabbed a basket, flying up to a tree branch. I plucked the apple and placed it in the basket. My mind eventually began to wander. How could my parents have lied to me? And all my life! Anger flooded my veins, and I accidentally put a dent in an apple. Well, they won't want it, so I'll have it.

I took a bite, the juices flooding my mouth. I sighed, taking another bite.

"I think they'll be mad if they see you eating their fruit."

"Well, who cares what they think? Besides, I'll just take a few more bites and then get back to work."

I finished the apple, wiping the juice from my mouth. Branches clawed at my legs as I climbed through the tree, filling the basket with the red fruit. Soon, the basket filled up, and I flew down, grabbing another basket. The cycle continued, until I had harvested all the fruit from the first tree. I wiped beads of sweat from my forehead, sitting down. My body ached in exhaustion.

"I doubt they'll appreciate it if you slack off."

"I'm exhausted."

However, I agreed with Ashlea. My muscles screamed in protest as I stood up. I sighed, grabbing a basket before flying up the tree.

Peaches were the product of this tree, and I couldn't resist grabbing a bite. Mmm. I needed to get to work, however, and took the peach from the tree. I felt the soft fuzz of the peach as it left my hand and landed into the basket with a plop.

Then, onto the lemon trees, whose fruit was sour yet delicious. The texture felt rough in my hand as I picked each one and put it into the basket. Rough like my life right now. What, with my dad's lying and my being stuck in this stupid place! The lemon's juice seeped from the lemon as I squeezed it angrily. I didn't care how sticky my hands would be later. I was MAD.

"Bird-shifter!" shouted a voice "You're ruining the food!"

I looked down and saw that Mr. Jones guy.

"Oh, hello."

"Get down from there! " he shouted angrily. I leapt down, 'accidentally' knocking him in the face with a wing. He growled, most likely in anger, and squeezed my wing. I let out of a cry of pain, and he punched me in the face. "Now tell me why you were destroying MY property."

"Don't make him mad. Just apologize and be good. Do you want to be killed by him, or would you like to stay alive?"

I sighed. *"Stay alive."*

"I just got worked up over a few memories. I shouldn't have let myself get so distracted. I'm sorry." I replied, lowering my head.

After a long silence, he looked at me in a glare and said "Since you are a newcomer, I will not punish you severely. However, you will clean my office after you complete your current task." He squeezed my wing yet again. "You're lucky I'm not doing more."

And with that, he walked away. I finished harvesting the fruit, though I did take a few fruits for myself. Luckily, they didn't notice. At the end of the day, I drifted into wonderful sleep.

A/N- More stuff happens next chapter - just you wait! Prepare for

an a - nope, not gonna spoil. But just wait!

Please share my story with your friends and family, and please, please, please comment and vote! You have no idea how much it means to me. Just press that star button. Please? For me?

I'll see ya in the comments! Bye for now!

~Pride_Heart

Chapter 22

I have come to accept the feeling of not knowing where I am going. And I have trained myself to love it. Because it is only when we are suspended in mid-air with no landing in sight, that we force our wings to unravel and alas begin our flight. And as we fly, we still may not know where we are going to. But the miracle is in the unfolding of the wings. You may not know where you're going, but you know that so long as you spread your wings, the winds will carry you."

_____-

"Wake up shifters!" shouted a voice. I opened my eyes groggily as everything from the past few days rushed back to me, and my heart beated quickly. I felt a pain go to my side as the man's foot connected with it.

"Get up!" he shouted in my ear.

"I'm getting up, stop kicking me."

I got to my feet, shooting him a cold, hard glare.

"You know how mad they were when you squeezed the lemon. Do you want to die at their hands?"

"No."

"My apologies, sir. I should not have done that."

"Just don't do it again." he replied in a gruff tone "Go to the board and see what your task is for today."

I nodded and walked away, going to the board. I had seen the board the day before, and knew where it was. I scanned my focus down the list until I saw my name.

Madelyn Ruth: Fishing - Report to the lake

I sighed; they couldn't have bothered to send some shark shifter or something.

"I doubt a shark would fit in a lake. I believe they know about your access to all species of avians and plan to have you shift into an osprey or other bird of prey."

"Now it makes sense. But how do I find the lake?"

"Fly up and look, perhaps."

I took the tip and flew up, looking below myself. It was thrilling, being up so high with the wind moving through my hair. Then, I felt a shock, and I went down. Halfway through the fall, I regained the use of my wings.

"What was that?"

"The force field, I believe. How else would you explain the shock?"

"Dang that force field."

"I see those men at the lake calling for you. You better go."

"Okay."

I flew down in a dive, feeling the wind move through my hair.

"Get down here, stupid shifter!" one of them shouted.

"Coming!" I replied, then landed seconds later.

"I see you've made contact with our force field." the second man said in a laugh. Oh, how I wished to send him a scowl - no, a brick to the face. I balled my fists angrily.

"You will shift into an osprey and catch enough fish to fill these two

buckets." he instructed "Failure to do so will result in punishment - a large one."

They both walked off, their footsteps sounding extremely ominous. I shuddered, and then focused on an osprey. I recalled the memory I had seen an osprey fly by the car window, how it looked in flight. Such beautiful birds. And I was about to become one.

My arms merged with my wings as the pattern changed. Then, I was shrinking, shrinking, shrinking. Feet became talons as my nose and mouth curled into a beak. I sprouted feathers, and after a few more changes, I was an osprey. I took off, flying over the water. The osprey's vision was keen, strong enough to see through the water. Fish swam through the water, oblivious to my flight. I felt kind of bad for them, but if I was to stay alive, this was what I would have to do.

Now, what to do, what to do.

"You need to keep your shadow off of the water, or else the fish will swim away."

"This may sound like a stupid question, but how do I do that?"

"It's not stupid at all. It is going to be your first time hunting fish, after all. You need to stay at a point where your shadow will be cast on land, not water. Then, dive and try to be quick."

"And you're sure it'll work?"

"Yes. You may have to try a few times, though. Hunting for fish isn't as easy as it looks."

"I doubted it would be. Now, I'm going to try to fish."

I followed Ashlea's instructions. But which type of fish would fill the bucket quicker?"

"Don't be picky. Just go for it."

I sighed. *"Fine."*

I dove, aiming for a large fish that was about to cross my path. And then I did it! Though the fish was trying to wriggle out of my grasp, I tried to keep it secure in my talons. Though I didn't know what I was doing - not in the slightest - maybe if I dug my talons in...

The fish flopped due to the lack of air, and soon, those were silenced. It was laying limp in my talons, and I dropped it into the bucket. I sighed; just so many more to go. I was about to catch another fish when everything started to shake. A loud, rumbling noise seemed to shake the earth, and I looked around frantically. And in my panic, I may have sorta...

Forgotten to flap. Yes, I did. Go ahead, laugh. I was afraid, and I'm not good at multi-task.

I was plummeting. This was it; I was going to die because of my stupidity. I didn't think to start flapping again; I was too petrified with fear. I thought I was going to die. I closed my eyes, bracing for impact.

The crash and burn never happened.

I opened my eyes, afraid of what I might see. Blood? A broken wing? Or worse, one of the hunters? Nope.

It was Tyler.

"Caught you." he said with a smirk before setting me down "Now shift back and get in the van."

Well, that doesn't sound suspicious at all. However, I did shift back.

"Get in the van? What are you? A kidnapper?"

"Nope; I'm sneaking you outta here. Trinity and a few others are here; we hijacked a van."

"Do any of you even have a license?"

"Trinity said she had her learner's permit and she practically already had her license."

"It doesn't count. But I'll take it. "

I took off, following Tyler. When we got to the van, all I saw was chaos. Men holding bronze, silver, and golden weapons surrounded the van. Trinity was cornered.

"Run, Madelyn!" she shouted "I'll be fine!"

"No, you won't!" I shouted back "I'm not leaving without you!"

"Go! I'll get out!" she shouted at me, and Tyler shoved me into the van. He drove away, the shaking of the vehicle like the horrible shakiness and uncertainty of my life.

A/N- Don't have much time to type, but thanks for getting GWSTB to 357 in fantasy. That's amazing! I couldn't have done it without you!

I've got to go, but please vote, comment, share, and I'll see ya in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 23

"Tyler!" I shouted, anger flooding my veins "Trinity's still trapped in there! She could be killed! We have to go back!"

"It's too risky. Trinity said she'd be willing to sacrifice herself for you, and she did."

"But what if she's killed!" I demanded.

"Then she'll die protecting you!"

"You really are soulless, aren't you?"

"Soulless, no. Caring about my staying alive, yes."

"But she's trapped there! She's my best friend!"

"Then go back there if you want." he said, stopping the car jerkily "Go, get out. Let both of your lives go to waste."

Oh, that little -

"No swearing, Madelyn." he said.

"Looks like he broke down the mental wall."

"Looks like I did. So, are you going or can I keep driving?"

What was I supposed to do; leave my best friend behind?

"You can." said Tyler. Ugh, that little mind reading maniac. "And be nice, Madelyn. I don't particularly like being called a maniac."

"Well, maybe if you stopped GETTING INTO MY MIND, I'd stop it. And two, I don't particuarlly like having my best friend STUCK IN SOME HUNTER'S BASE, BUT HERE WE ARE!"

I threw my hands up in frustration, which hit the top of the car. I sighed. "So please, cut me some slack."

"Do you even know what it's like, Madelyn? I've been running from those hunters all my life. Do you know how hard it is living in constant fear? They killed my family, and I barely escaped alive! Do you know how hard it is, living with the guilt that you could've saved your family, but were too much of a coward to do it?"

"Actually, I do. The whole reason the shifter village burned is because of me! Their leader was captured by the scientists because I didn't tell him that they knew where we were! I was a coward, and others suffered because of it. And you want to know how I got captured? My own father took me from the lab to their little center. Do you even know what I've gone through these past few days? I acoknoledge that you've had a hard like, but aren't you used to it? I've just become a shifter a week or two ago! All of this stress and pain was thrown onto me, just like that! So if we're talking about hard stuff going on, go and make me the queen of it!"

"Calm down, Madelyn." he said as he started driving again.

"How can I even be calm? All of this happened to me and I don't

know what to do. Trinity was with me through this, and if I lost my best friend, I don't know what I'd do!"

"Well, we'll get her out later. For now, we have to be on the run for a little while. Maybe it will get your mind off of your 'oh so horrible life.'"

I started pounding on the car window, shouting at Tyler as I did so. He didn't even care that my best friend could be facing death! Well, I knew who'd be dead if he didn't turn around.

"I swear if you don't turn this car around right now, so help me I will -"

He put his hand over my mouth, much to my anger. Oh, he was going to get it. Anger started the adrenaline begging to be let out. One glance at my face and you'd be able to tell that I wanted you to stay away. However, Tyler paid no attention. Oh, that arrogant jerk was going to get what he deserved.

I took his hand off of my mouth. "Who do you think you are? The boss of the world? Oh, then I better do everything you say... not! Now turn around this car or so help me I will make sure you don't leave this stupid car alive, you jerk!"

"Your threats don't scare me, Madelyn. Do you want to stay alive, or do you want to be a slave of those horrid hunters for the rest of your life? I'm trying to save you and make sure that nothing bad happens to you! Shifters stick together, and I'm not going to let yourself get killed!"

"Then why don't we turn around and get Trinity! She's a shifter, and like you said, shifters stick together! Are we going to turn around or not?"

He said nothing.

"Answer me!" I demanded, anger tainting my voice.

"Not. We're not going back right now, or for a while. Now shut your mouth; I need to focus."

"Focus on driving? Yeah right; it's so horrible the police would've thought a four year old was driving it!" Under my breath, I muttered "And you're more annoying than a four year old."

After a few seconds of silence, Tyler furiously shouted "What did you say?!"

"Yeah, I said it! You're more annoying than a freaking four year old! Even they shut up some of the dang time!"

"Why don't you just shut up and let me drive?" he asked "It's not like you're going to make a difference in my decison."

I balled my fists angrily, sending him a glare. "Oh, so my opinion doesn't matter? Yeah, sure it doesn't." After a moment of silence, I started into my angry ranting once again. "This is because I'm a coward, isn't it?"

"No. There's good in you, but you were afraid of consequences for your actions. That's what led to you hiding what had happened from Caspian. And I know you deeply regret it. You can go out there and get killed by your own kin, as well as your friend dying. Or, you can come with me, and we'll save Trinity later on." He sighed. "It's just that you tried to fix what you had done, unlike me. I was a coward. You're amazing, Madelyn, and I just don't know what I'd do without you. Do you get what I'm saying?"

Before I had a chance to reply, I heard police sirens wailing.

"Tyler, stop the car."

"Why?"

"It's the police."

He stopped the car, and seconds later, a police officer came to the window of the car.

A/N- *Sniffs in* Is that a shipping I smell? I guess it is...

:3

Anyway, 303 in fantasy! Can you believe it?! I screenshotted it probably 20 times I was so dang excited. Thanks!

And I'm going to be reading two different series.

1- The Maze Runner

And Number Two

2- The Mortal Instruments

No spoilers! I beg of you! *sobs* Already went through that with Allegiant. *sobs more*

Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 24

"Birds know themselves not to be at the center of anything, but at the margins of everything. The end of the map. We only live where someone's horizon sweeps someone else's. We are only noticed on the edge of things; but on the edge of things, we notice much."

———

"Ashlea, what do I do?" I asked.

"I honestly don't know. Jump out the other door and fly away, that's what I'd do."

"Can't you get arrested for that sort of stuff?"

"Does it matter right now? If that cop sees your wings you'll be sent back to that lab. And you can't afford to be sent there right now, what with Trinity captured by the hunters and Tyler's feelings for you."

"Right. So I do that now or..."

"Of course you do it right now!"

I looked at Tyler. "We're flying out the other door. Unless you want to be taken to the lab again, because you seem to be so concerned for our safety, and it'd be a shame if we were captured."

Tyler sighed. "Fine. But those infirmitatis have dangerous weapons."

"What does that mean?"

"It's the shifter word for human. It means weak creatures. Without their weapons and supplies, most humans wouldn't last a week in the wild."

"I find that kind of offensive, calling humans weak, what with me being a former human and all."

"Shut up and open the door already."

I sighed. We had limited time, and I didn't want to continue the argument. "Fine." I opened the door, taking flight. I heard whispers run through the crowd. Tyler flew up beside me.

Then came the bullets. They were being aimed at us, and I saw the same exact symbol I had seen at the science lab. I remembered it faintly, but when I saw it, I recognized it.

"Fly away!" shouted Tyler. I nodded, taking flight. Adrenaline flooded my veins, and my heart beated quickly. I zig-zagged, hoping not to get hit. I then went up, soaring over the range of fire. I looked around frantically, searching for Tyler. Where was he?

"You have feelings for him, don't you?"

"No, I don't."

"Sure, sure."

Seconds later, Tyler flew up to join me.

"I have come back. Did you miss me?" I shook my head. We flew there, adrenaline starting to give way and reveal exhaustion.

Seconds later, his face twisted into a pained grimace.

"What's wrong?" I asked, concerned.

"One of those men shot me in the arm." he managed to say. I glanced at his arm; blood was seeping from the wound. I shuddered, then looked at him.

From the many dystopian books I had read - I know, not a very good source, but what did I have to go on? "I think you need to apply pressure."

He nodded. "That is correct. I'll need to stop the bleeding. I have a wrap in my bag; I'll need to use your jacket until then."

I glanced at my jacket. It was old and rugged, and besides, it was spring! I took it off and handed it to Tyler. "Thanks," he muttered.

"No problem, though you won't need to use the wrap." I replied, then looked at the wound once again, spasms of disgust rippling through my body. I looked away almost as quickly as I had looked at the wound. He put my jacket around the wound. Tyler startled me when he spoke again.

"Oh, and why is that?"

"Should I say?"

"Why not? He IS a shifter like you."

"I have the ability to heal others and myself," I explained "Though it may not seem as impressive as your power, it actually helps a lot when you're trying to stay alive."

"I don't think healing is a bad gift. My sister had that gift. Sadly, the hunters were quite experienced; they had brought bronze weapons. She couldn't heal herself."

I watched as a single tear slid down Tyler's face. I wanted to show him that I cared, but I didn't want to take the chance of Tyler going without being healed any longer than necessary.

"Follow me, into the forest. I'll heal you there." I promised. He nodded, wiping away the tear, and I motioned for him to follow me.

I flapped my wings, staying well above the shooting range. Tyler was behind me, his face still holding a grimace. He didn't have to wait long, because we soon reached the forest. I flew down cautiously, looking frantically for any sign of people or guns. When I deemed it safe, I helped Tyler to a sitting position. I unraveled the jacket, setting it aside.

The bullet was embedded in the side of his arm, and I didn't remove it for fear of further damaging his leg.

"Ashlea, help me here. Surely you know what to do."

"Don't try to remove the bullet, you'll only injure him more."

"Glad we both know that. But what will happen if I try to heal him with the bullet still in there?"

"It should become non-existent as you heal it, and then it'll close up as if the wound had never been there in the first place."

"And you're sure about this? Because the whole 'disappearing bullet act' seems a little far-fetched."

"Trust me on this."

I placed my hand over Tyler's wound, and focused on healing the wound. My thoughts seemed to clear, and images of the bullet disappearing filled my vision. I couldn't do anything but focus on closing that wound. I felt myself begin to tremble as I could feel Tyler's pain. There was no wound, but the pain was there, full force. I began to grow tired, and sleep tried to lure me into peaceful rest, but I refused. Tyler was more important; I needed his help if I was going to rescue Trinity and the others.

Then, everything went back into focus. It was how it was, except that Tyler's wound was gone.

"Ashlea, that was crazy. Tell me what it was."

"There's this one little thing I forgot to tell you. That happens when you heal and the obstruction disappears."

"So all that pain and exhaustion from getting rid of one little bullet?"

"Yeah. But look on the bright side; Tyler is healed. You'll be able to recruit some shifters to rescue the shifters."

"Can I rest now?"

"You don't have to ask my permission for that. This area IS safe enough."

As I was about to fall asleap, I saw a blurry image of a squirrel. But then, it changed. Standing before me was a man with a sly grin on his face.

"Found you." he said just as I fell asleap.

A/N- Don't have much time to type right now, but thank you so so much for the 283 in fantasy! I can hardly believe that a book that came from my bizzare daydreaming has gotten so much success! Thank you so much for that!

I've gotta go, but please comment, vote (see that little star button? Click it please), share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 25

The rising of birds in their flight is the sign of an ambuscade. Startled beasts indicate that a sudden attack is coming."

——

When I awoke, I looked down and saw that I was in a tree.

"I see you've woken," said a voice. I jumped, then looked behind myself. It was Tyler.

"Who was that squirrel shifter?"

"I don't know." replied Tyler "But he has a weapon. Look."

I spun around to see that same man from earlier. And he was aiming a gun at us. Oh crap.

"Please," I began, starting to tremble "Leave us alone. We've already been though enough crap these past few weeks!"

"Oh," he said in a tone that seemed to chill me to the bone "But why would I pass up a chance to make the head hunter pleased? And why don't you calm down, Madelyn? You never seemed to have a problem with my spying on you before?"

"What do you mean?"

"You've never seen me before?" He shifted into a squirrel, and in an instant, I recognized him. He was there the day I had become a shifter, and so many more times. Like when I was at the carnival with my parents, or when I had gone on a run with Trinity. I looked at Tyler.

"He's been spying on me all my life!" I exclaimed. "And I was oblivious to it! The entire time! Tyler put his hand on my shoulder.

"You don't know that, Madelyn," he said, trying to reassure me, most likely.

"But he has that strange little diamond shaped mark, and I've seen that mark before! This isn't a coincidence!"

Seconds later, he shot a glare at the squirrel shifter. A sickening laugh filled the air as he shifted back.

"Madelyn, call off your boyfriend." he commanded.

"He's not my boyfriend!" I retorted.

"Yeah, and the sun isn't shining."

"That's actually quite true if you're talking about it in a metaphorical sense."

"Shut up, project!" he shouted, and I was taken aback.

"What do you mean by project?"

"I've said too much. Just come with me," he said in an icy tone. Yeah, in what sane world would I come with a man who called me a project?

"No, no, no sir. You've captured my attention, and I'm not going to just forget about what you just said."

I felt Tyler place his hand on my shoulder. "Don't make the guy with access to guns angry."

He chuckled, then a smirk spread across his face. "Listen to your boyfriend, Madelyn."

I took a deep breath and said "For the last dang time, HE IS NOT MY BOYFRIEND!"

"Think what you think, but you're coming with me," He shifted back into a squirrel and scurried up the tree. Oh please, you don't have your gun anymore. And how was he going to hurt me as a squirrel?

"What are you gonna do?" asked Tyler "Nibble us to death? Yeah right."

He shifted back, and I heard something drag against the ground. And then, the gun was in his hand.

Oh crap. That guy had telekinesis. I had a sickening feeling in my stomach that this wasn't going to end well. I flew off the tree, soaring high into the air.

Turns out that his telekinesis could control things in the air. Do you know what it's like to plummet down with the feeling that you're going to die? Lemme just tell you right now that it's absolutely terrifying.

My wings were at my sides, and no mater how hard I tried, they wouldn't open. There was a resistance that was keeping me from opening them. The name of that resistance; telekinesis. Did it anger me? Yes. Was I terrified beyond belief? Even more so.

I was falling, falling, falling. I was going to die. I had thought that I was going to die before, but now, I really was. A sickening feeling crawled its way into my stomach, and I braced myself for the impact that would kill me.

The impact never came. I breathed heavily, not daring to open my eyes.

"Am I dead?" I asked.

"You can open your eyes, Madelyn," replied a voice, and I recognized it as Tyler's. "You're not dead."

"But you soon will be if you do not give in," said an icy voice; the one of the squirrel shifter. I opened my eyes slowly to see that I was in Tyler's arms. I blushed, embarrassed, before Tyler set me down.

"Be careful, Madelyn." warned the squirrel shifter "Your little boyfriend won't be around for long."

I sent a glare at him. "He's not my boyfriend! Why does everyone think that?"

I ran toward him, trying to send a kick at him. I ended up missing and the only thing I had acomplished was looking stupid. Stupid TV shows, making it look easy. An evil sounding laugh started at the squirrel shifter and moved though the forest.

"Stop laughing at me!" I demanded, anger and adrenaline moving through my veins.

"But how can I not laugh at one of Mr. Jones's projects?"

Now I knew who was in charge of the 'project'. And I knew where I'd be visiting when I went back to that hunter place. Thank you, you idiotic squirrel shifter.

"So Mr. Jones is in charge of a 'project'." I said, trying to sound like I was in control of the situation. Obviously I wasn't, but a bird shifter can try. "You gave me even more information. Thanks for that."

He ran towards me, and I hardly had time to react. Next thing I knew, he had pinned me against a tree.

"Let me go, you idiot!" I shouted angrily

"Never! You're far too valuable to give up!"

Now he's refering to me as an object?! That just fueled the flames of rage even more. I tried to pry his hands off of me, but with no success.

"Perhaps you'll be even more use to Mr. Jones dead," he suggested in an icy tone "He never said what condition he wanted you in."

He was about to shoot me when someone freed me. But it wasn't Tyler.

It was my dad.

A/N- Did you see that coming? Nope? I just did that. But are Madelyn's father's intentions good or evil?

Please comment, vote, and I'll see you next chapter! Bye for now!

Chapter 26

[image]

Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.

-Langston Hughes

_____

I looked at my father, who was staring back at me. I got up, cautiously stepping away. He had betrayed me. I sent a glare at him, one filled with hatred and hurt.

"You betrayed me!" I shouted angrily.

My father began to speak. "Madelyn, it's not like that!"

I flew up. "Sure it isn't. You called me an it! And now your boss is doing some sort of project on me? Yeah, that's not betrayal at all."

"I was forced, Madelyn. When I married your mother, I was forced into becoming a hunter! It was either me or you! And I cared about you! I couldn't let them just turn you into a ruthless killing machine! So,I did what I had to! You think I wanted to have all the cameras, sprayers, and spy shifters put in the house? But I did it because I care for you! There were cameras everywhere in the house and they were spying on us the entire time! I couldn't tell you or I would be killed! We all would! And then where would we be?"

I sighed. "Dead. But that's not to say that this is true. How do I

know this isn't a set of lies?"

"I'm your father. Why would I ever lie to you, Madelyn?"

"I don't know, you sent me to a place full of hunters who wanted to kill me - and still do - and now I'm on the run! And you've lied to me my entire life! I trusted you, and you betrayed me. Do you know how much that hurts? It pains me inside to think of those moments where you betrayed me, Dad. I want things to be how they were before this happened."

"Madelyn, I'm sorry this happened to you. But we have to push through it. And I need you to stay strong."

"How can I know that I can trust you, Dad?" I asked "So much has happened, and I feel betrayed."

I landed in a tree. "It hurts. And I want things to be like normal, but that's never going to happen. I don't know if I can trust you, Dad."

"But you can, Madelyn. I escaped bullets and your own mother to come here and help you. Do you really think I'd do that if I wanted to hurt you?"

I sighed. "No. And I'm sorry, but I can't know if you're really on my side anymore."

"But Madelyn, I am on your side. And I'm your father. Shouldn't you be able to trust me?"

"I should, but you kidnapped me and took me to that place full of hunters. It was frightening, and plus, you acted really evil." I sighed again "I don't know who I can trust. I mean, I can trust Madelyn and Tyler, but besides them, I don't know."

"I know this is hard for you, Madelyn, but I'm here to help. I sacrificed my own safety for you. I even ended up with this."

He then lifted up his pant leg slightly to see a bronze bullet imbedded in it. Ouch. So maybe he really did care.

"They shot you?"

He nodded. "You have a bandage or something?"

I sighed; it was freaky when I healed Tyler and the pain had come to me.

"You have to do this, Madelyn."

"I know. But how do I know he's on my side?"

"He took a bullet to the leg to escape the hunters and find you. Isn't that enough proof?"

I sighed, knowing Ashlea was right. I glanced at my dad, and then at the bronze bullet. I was going to have to do this for my dad, no matter how much it pained me.

"I have better." I replied "I can heal you, but you're going to have to stay calm, alright?"

"And you're sure this will work?" asked my father, and I could hear curiousity in his voice.

"It will, because I've done it before."

I placed my hand above the wound, and the same thing happened. A pain ran through my leg, burning with the intensity of fire. I shut my eyes, taking deep breaths. It would be worth it.

Images of a disolving bronze bullet filled my mind and caused pain to race through my body. I wanted to stop, but I had to do it. My dad had risked his life just for me, and I was going to help him with the aftermath. A wave of nausea washed over me, and I felt like I was going to hurl.

Then, all pain simply went away. I was, however, exhausted. Not so much that I had to fall asleap right then and there. It was the 'I stayed up until three in the morning' type of exhaustion. It wasn't too tired, and I could manage for now.

"It's done." I replied, looking at my father.

"Thank you, Madelyn. I know I acted like a jerk, but I couldn't stop

the act. They have cameras everywhere. They would've killed me if I had helped you." After a pause lasting half a minute, my dad spoke again. "Who's that?"

I looked behind me and saw Tyler, who was triumphantly holding a dead squirrel.

"Tyler. That's Tyler."

Then, the squirrel moved. Well, looks like it's not dead.

"If you come back, you die." I heard Tyler snarl at the squirrel shifter. Then, he let him go. And he ran faster than any squirrel I had ever seem

"He's a shifter like you?"

I nodded. "He's gonna help me rescue Trinity and all the other shifters."

"I'll help you rescue your friend," began my father "After all, I know my way around that place. But we'll have to go soon; she was captured a day or two ago, and I fear that her execution may be soon."

We spent most of the night planning; it was almost four when we had finished. We then got to sleep, with Tyler and I taking shifts in case my dad was doing an act. When it was time for my shift, what I saw was shocking.

A/N- That quote up there is one of my favorites.

Prepare for a huge shocker next chapter. But here's a hint; When you leave the hunters, you don't leave normal.

PM me if you think you know what's gonna happen.

Please comment (If you're an author, you know how important these are), vote (This is really important too), share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 27

Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark.

-Rabindranath Tagore

___

"Madelyn... Madelyn..." said a voice. My eyes snapped open to see that it was Tyler. I got into a sitting position.

"Lemme guess, it's my shift?" He nodded. I got up, stretching "Alright, I'm getting up. I'll wake you when the hour's up."

He nodded again, laying down and it seemed that he had fallen asleep almost instantly.

I looked at my dad. I wanted to trust him, but I didn't know if I could. I mean, he's my dad, but it's hard to know what to do. He had betrayed me. And that hurts, for those of you who haven't felt like they've been slapped in the face with a wet fish. My gut and my heart told me to trust him, and I wanted to follow them, but my mind was telling me all the ways he could turn on me and stab me in the back. It was hard to know which decision to make.

I sighed, glancing at my dad.

"Madelyn, it'll be alright. I mean; he took a bullet to the leg for you! If that's not caring, then I don't know what is. Do you want to be forced to work for the hunters and kill innocents? He wanted to protect you, and that was the cost of that. He's on your side now."

"But how can I be entirely sure that he won't turn on me when my mind

keeps giving me ways he could?"

"You're being paranoid, Madelyn," replied Ashlea "That's what happens when you feel someone has betrayed you; I'd know. But your father was doing it to protect you! And he's on your side now; you can trust him. Believe me."

"And I do. But I'll still be watching just in case he turns his back on us. Just for a week or two. Then we'll know if he's truly on our side."

I waited, yawns escaping my lips every few minutes, showing my sleep deprivation. But I had to watch my father, to ensure my safety and Tyler's.

"You really care about Tyler, don't you?"

I could feel heat rising to my cheeks. *"No, I don't."*

"Denial."

"It's not denial if I don't have feelings for him."

"Oh, but you do."

"I don't. Now be quiet so I can focus."

"Fine, fine."

It was around the end of my shift when something started to happen. As the sun rose, a change started to overtake my father. I watched in horror as his ears changed from human to wolf and creeped up his head. I leapt back in surprise, then nudged Tyler.

"What is it Madelyn?" he asked groggily.

"Look." I replied.

He rose his head, and then I saw an alarmed expression cross his face.

"What's happening?"

"I don't know. But it's best if we wake him."

"I don't know; is your dad a calm sort of guy?"

"Normally. There was the time when he and my mom shot at me, but that was an act. Other than the times when he was acting, he's been calm."

"Is he the really protective kind of dad who doesn't like you to date?"

"He's been bit by a little bug..."

"Called insanity,"

"Called love."

"Quiet,"

"Okay."

I kept taking glances at my waking father.

"Is it morning already?" he asked sleepily.

"It's seven in the morning, so yes."

I glanced at Tyler and mouthed the words 'Should we tell him?'

"He's going to find out anyway."

"Find out what?" I heard my dad ask.

"Why don't you see for yourself? There's a puddle right over there."

Seconds later, a scream ran through the forest. He had seen.

"Quiet; anyone could hear us!"

"The hunters don't give up easy," he muttered "I should've seen this coming."

"Seen what coming?"

"This. And I shouldn't have underestimated the new ally."

"Who's the new ally?"

"That WellBorne Science Institute."

"Wait... the hunters allied with the scientists?"

He nodded. "That's most likely how they were able to do this. I should've made more precautions when escaping. I made plenty and yet they saw me escaping and did this."

"So you were expecting this?"

"I was expecting something like it. I remember that needle nicking the side of my arm."

"And why didn't you tell me?"

"Madelyn, it's not your place to worry about these sort of things. It's my job."

"These past few weeks, I've been having to worry about all sorts of things. You should've told me; Tyler and I could've helped."

"You and him, you're just friends right?"

"Yeah," I replied "He's helping me free Trinity."

"Okay."

"So, did they just do that or are you a shifter too?"

My father was silent for a moment or two. "They probably turned me into a shifter; so they'd have more reason to either enslave or kill me."

"So that means..."

"Your mother will be looking to destroy us."

But she's my mom! And Dad's her husband!

"I refuse to believe it."

"You can ignore it, but it's true. I've seen your mother plotting your demise. I wanted to speak out about it, but I couldn't, for fear of being killed."

My heart raced. It wasn't true. I hadn't even seen my mother when I had been captured. He could've just been tricked.

"Madelyn," said Tyler, snapping me out of my thoughts "It's no lie. I saw; the memory is as vivid and clear as if he had just seen it. Your mother is on the hunter's side."

I felt a pair of arms wrap around me, giving me a warm embrace. It was Tyler. I smiled, my heart filling with some emotion that wasn't quite happiness, but similar.

"Break it up," I heard my dad say, and I turned around. "I thought you said you were just friends."

"And we are." I replied.

"Sure you are, Madelyn."

"We are!"

"You have feelings for him; I can tell. It's nothing to be ashamed of."

I ignored Ashlea, and looked at my dad.

"I'm going for a little flight; I'll be back soon."

Before he could protest, I took off, going higher into the air. It was beautiful.

And the perfect place to think.

So I was thinking as I flew. There was no more doubt on my mind that my dad was on my side. And even if he hadn't in the first place, he would have to be, now that he was a shifter himself.

"But wouldn't you need to teach him how to shift first?"

And so I landed, then said to dad "It's time you learned how to shift."

A/N- And there's the shocker.

Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 28

A forest bird never wants a cage.

-Henrik Ibsen

——

Dad sighed. "You're gonna teach me?"

"Yes; I've had to shift many, many times these past few weeks."

Then, I spoke to Ashlea.

"How am I supposed to do it?"

"Don't worry; I'll help you teach him. Remember what I did when I taught you to shift? Have him do something like that."

How out of the ordinary it was, that I was giving a lesson to my

father when ordinarily it would be the other way around. Well, life wasn't normal anymore. Heck, I was a shifter. I had wings.

Yeah, in no way was that normal.

My dad snapped me out of my thoughts. "So, Madelyn, how do you shift?"

I would've honestly thought that the hunters had known by now, or the scientists had figured out and told the hunters. But still, I didn't mind. It could be a useful asset when freeing Trinity and the other shifters.

"I'm fairly certain that you're a wolf shifter," I said, looking at Dad "So just form an image of a wolf in your mind and focus on becoming it."

I had drawn on the moment where Ashlea had taught me how to fly. It was mere weeks ago, and yet it felt like it had happened years go.

"Probably because so much has happened."

"Probably. But I have a question. What if the mission fails, and I'm captured by the hunters and scientists?"

"They'll either kill you, enslave you, or experiment on you. Most likely the first."

"That's really reassuring. Thank you Ashlea."

"Stop your sarcasm."

"Fine."

I sighed, then looked at my Dad. I had been so engrossed in my conversation with Ashlea that I had missed seeing my father shift.

He was clad in brownish grey fur, and his face bore a wolfish grin.

"I see you've succeeded. How does it feel?"

He said nothing.

"You can speak to shifters even if you're shifted." I explained.

"Oh. That's embarrassing."

"Don't feel embarrassed. I didn't know for a while, actually."

"This is so strange!" I heard my dad exclaim "Who would've thought that I'd be able to shift?"

"Sorry to burst your mini happiness bubble," I began, "But we still have to go rescue Trinity; remember?"

"Right. So, what do I need to learn?"

I was about to say something when Tyler spoke first.

"You'll need to learn how to fight," he began "And stealth training is also needed."

"But we were about to rescue Trinity!" I complained "And who knows how much longer she has?"

"Give me a minute; I'll see."

Tyler flew off. No! He was going to go to that hunter place! I couldn't let him get killed!

"You have feelings for him,"

"No, I don't. It's just that he knows how to fight and I don't. We need him to rescue Trinity. And he can't do that if he's meeting the same fate."

"Denial."

"It's not denial if I don't have feelings for him in the first place!"

I ignored what Ashlea had said next, because I was flying after Tyler, shouting his name over and over again. "Tyler! Tyler get back here!"

Eventually, Tyler looked at me.

"What?" he demanded.

"You can't just go there!" I exclaimed "If you died, then our situation would be even worse! We need you! I need you to help me get my friend back! I mean, I don't know if she's alive or dead, but she could be interrogated, not dead. That's what my dad suspects. He says that the hunters want me, not Trinity. I mean, I'll try and get her out, but if I can't, I'll have to give myself up."

"But you can't!" I heard him exclaim "I care about you! I can't let you go there and get killed!"

"And I can't let you sacrifice yourself to see if Trinity's alright," I replied "Do you see my point of view on this?" I stared into his eyes "We'll figure it out. But you are not sacrificing yourself for my happiness. Now come on."

He obeyed grudgingly, and I kept thanking him.

"Don't mention it." he answered.

Father's reaction wasn't an expected one, as he was a little mad at Tyler. Normally, he'd be calm, but this time he wasn't.

"Dad, calm down." I said with a sigh.

"Sorry," he replied. "I mean, we need him to teach us how to fight."

"Yeah." I agreed, then turned to face Tyler "So, how do we fight?"

It took hours and hours to learn how. There were so many moves, and you had to move the right way, otherwise you'd be in for pain. A lot of it.

Still, I kept on training. Tyler said that we had only covered the mere basics, and that there was still so much more to do.

"Madelyn, you need to know much more on fighting. You can't go in there unprepared or untrained! They'll kill you!"

I opened my wings half of the way. "Hello, I have wings."

"And there's a thing called hunters. Yeah, their entire purpose IS TO KILL US!"

I sighed, placing my hand on my forehead, trying not to shout. "And they'll kill Trinity if we don't do something. We've dodged bullets before; we can do it again. And if one of us is hit, I can heal them."

"And there's this tiny, small little thing. What's it called again? Oh yeah; they could enslave us!"

"But shifters stick together," I reminded "Trinity's one of us, and we're gonna help her the best we can."

"And if we fail?"

"We won't." I assured, not entirely sure.

"I know you're not sure." he replied. Dangit, I had forgotten to put the mental wall up!

"Out of my mind, Tyler. We're going to rescue Trinity, and there's nothing you can do to stop me."

Dad had shifted back, and was sternly looking at Tyler. "Surely we're prepared enough, Tyler. It's settled; we're going to rescue Trinity first thing tomorrow morning."

Before Tyler could argue, I held my hand up to his face. "We are going to rescue Trinity. Now, we'll get some rest and we'll go rescue her once we're rested enough."

Minutes later, I was asleep.

A/N- How'd you like this chapter?

I have a question. How many of my readers (You fabulous guys and gals!) have been with me when the train-wreck called A CATastrophe (No, that's literally the title of the book) was on here? Well, here's the good news. I've gotten the first 3 drafts completed. No, that doesn't mean I'll publish it yet.

The school year is about to start, and I'm in this advanced english

program.(thememeguardian you know what I'm talking about) I'm going to have the teacher(s) (There's two teachers, each teach a seperate class) help me. And then, I'm going beyond the E-Books.

I'm going to go through the extra work to make it into a physical copy.

My goal is to hold the physical copy of A Cat-astrophe (I changed how it's spelled) by the end of the 2015-2016 school year.

And I'll definitely tell you guys and gals when it's published.

Isn't this exciting?!

Anyway, please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 29

[image]

A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song.

—

I yawned, stretching as I opened my eyes groggily.

"It's morning," I heard a voice say. It was dad. I still jumped a little when I heard it, as I had grown accustomed to hearing his voice when he was against me. It was waning away, the startled reaction that my father's voice gave me, but that was kind of expected.

"Hi dad." I said, getting to my feet.

"Good morning Madelyn," I heard him reply.

"Depends on what your definition of good is. We're going to the hunter's area today, remember? And we'll need your knowledge of the area to help us rescue Trinity."

"And we're going stealth, correct? Because we don't have enough people to storm in there."

"Yes, we're going stealth," I heard Tyler confirm.

I was a little nervous, but I knew I had to do it. For Trinity, and all the other shifters trapped. The town of shifters needed me, and I needed to help them. After all, it was my fault that they got stuck there. A horrible, sickening, guilty feeling entered my stomach.

"Calm down, Madelyn. I have confidence that you'll rescue everyone. You've just got to believe in yourself."

"But what if we fail?"

"Don't start to doubt yourself. Go in there with confidence, alright?"

"But what if I-"

"You won't."

"Oh, and how do you know this?"

"I don't. But go in there with confidence, and you'll have the inner strength to keep on fighting."

I was engrossed in my conversation with Ashlea, and I jumped when I felt a hand on my shoulder. Then, I sighed in relief. It was just dad.

"Hey Madelyn, we're going."

"Try and stay somewhat hidden; Tyler and I will be flying. Remember the plan?"

Both my dad and Tyler nodded. I pushed off the ground, becoming airborne. The wind blew my hair back, probably getting it incredibly tangled, but I didn't care. I was going to enjoy the few minutes I had before having to go down to the unpleasant - and that's putting it nicely - place of the hunters.

I glanced to my right and saw Tyler. I saw a small smile tug at the corners of his lips. I felt a slight heat move to my cheeks, and I looked down. My dad was no longer in a human state. Underneath

me, my dad was running with the speed of a wolf. He had shifted.

"Well, that's not suspicious." I shouted, doubting he could hear me from down there.

The hunter's buildings and fields came into view, and a feeling of dread filled me. Oh, how badly I wanted to turn around, to go and return to the forest. However, I couldn't. I needed to rescue Trinity and all of the other shifters. I had let them down, and I wasn't going to do that again.

"You'll be alright, Madelyn. Just try and be as quick as you can. Get in, get everyone free, get out. Alright?"

"Alright," I replied, though I wasn't entirely sure of my safety. And Mr. Mind-Reader had to get into my mind.

Over the wind, I heard Tyler call out something.

"What?"

"Don't be afraid."

I wanted to explain to him that it wasn't that easy, but I stayed silent. I didn't want my throat to ache from yelling over the wind.

I recalled the plan. We were to hijack a car - Illegal, I know, but what choice did we have? - have dad drive it - we couldn't have Tyler driving again; that was dangerous - and go through the force-field. Seemed simple enough.

In the distance, I could see a white car, with the hunter emblem on it.

"Dad!" I shouted "Incoming car. Get ready to gain control of it."

He looked up, most likely in acknowledgement. He dashed forward, now closer to the street. I watched as the car drew nearer.

I rushed downwards, watching as my father sped toward the car. It shook a little - not from the weight of my father, but most likely from trembling. I could only imagine how we had startled him. I

heard a crash, and saw that my father had broken the car window. Shards were embedded in his fur, and blood seeped through, probably from wounds underneath the fur. I'd have to heal him. But the hole was too small for me to fit through in my current state.

I shifted into a canary, flying through the car window and sitting beside my father before shifting back. Dad had shifted back into himself, and the glass shards had mostly fallen off, except for a few ones on his arms. Already the wounds had started to form scabs, probably due to the enhanced healing rate.

I looked behind me and saw Tyler. Good; everyone was here.

We were inside of the hunters' and scientists' institute. As my dad drew the car to a stop, I trembled, fear permeating every bone in my body. Dad must've seen my nervousness.

"We'll be in and out," I heard his say "Don't worry."

Alright. Because it's super easy to not worry when you're going into a place full of people who want to kill you. I didn't reply, but simply nodded, stepping out of the car.

It was even more terrible than I remembered. Weights were attached to the ankles of the working shifters, reminding me of the cliche prison scenes in movies.

I took to the air, looking all around. I stayed semi-low, not wanting to encounter the force-field. The first place I went were the horse stables, the same place I had been forced to stay for those horrid few days.

As I looked around frantically, I was unable to see Trinity. It soon became clear to me that she wasn't in here. So I flew out, looking at the fields where many shifters worked.

Then, I looked at my father and Tyler. They were backing away, and my dad had shifted.

I soon knew why.

A group of hunters were approaching.

A/N-

So...

OHMIGOSH!!! THIS IS THE HIGHEST RANKING I'VE EVER GOTTEN!

Thank you so much!

Anyway, if there are any little words in parentheses that say (Ashlea), that's because I've been using written kitten as I write. (If you wanna check it out it's writtenkitten.net) It gives you a cute kitten picture every 100 words.

So dang cute and fluffy!

Please vote, share, comment, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 30

[image]

In order to see birds, it is necessary to become part of the silence.

-Robert Lynd

———

Tyler looked up at me. "Go get everyone free; we'll hold them off."

Okay, that wasn't going to be easy, considering that armed hunters were approaching us. A bronze bullet almost hit me - it would have if I hadn't flown out of the way - and I flew off. I needed to find Trinity and the others. I didn't know if Caspian would be here - he could still be in the lab - but if the hunters and scientists had allied, then he could be here.

I flew quickly, ignoring the burning pain of exhaustion. I needed to find Trinity. Those words repeated themselves in my mind. Then, I saw her.

"Trinity!" I shouted "It's me!"

She looked up. "Madelyn? Is that you?"

"Yes! Come on! We need to free everyone!"

At that moment, a hunter shoved her back, aiming a gun at me. I flew forward, going behind him. He spun around, a look of anger upon his face. He shot a bullet, and he narrowly missed. I flew up,

then landed behind him. He spun around once again, and when he exhaled, I saw my opportunity. I sent a forceful kick to his abdomen, knocking the wind out of him.

I turned to Trinity. "We need to get the others."

She gestured toward the chains on her feet. Right.

"You know what? I'll try and get the keys. You stay out of danger, and try to get as many shifters out as you can."

"Alright. Where will we meet up?"

I thought for a moment before replying with "Meet up at the stables."

I took off, looking for the keys. I didn't know where they'd be, but I had a fairly good idea of it.

Now, to find Mr. Jones's office. If I recalled correctly, then it was near the entrance. I flew over the fighting, towards the entrance. I spotted the building, and the horrid memories arrived, taking me aback.

"Calm yourself, Madelyn."

I took a deep breath and landed, opening the door as quietly as I could.

But it creaked, and I could hear evil laughter echo through the room. I recognized it. So Mr. Jones was in here. Confirming my suspicions, a voice spoke.

"I see you've come, Madelyn Ruth. You're just as bad as your traitor of a father, leaving like that. Why don't you just submit, and no harm will come to you."

I moved silently, hoping that Mr. Jones would think it was just the wind, or something else. I could see the faint glint of light on the keys, as well as the silhouette of Mr. Jones. I made my way towards Mr. Jones, staying low.

"I know you're here, Madelyn Ruth. I am giving you one more chance to submit."

I stayed silent. I almost had my hand on the key when a hand gripped my wrist, squeezing it tightly.

"Your chance is over, little bird. Like a canary in a coal mine, it's time for you to stop singing and die."

"Never!" I shouted, sending a kick at him. He blocked it, angering me.

"Then how shall I execute you? Hanging? Perhaps. Poison? Possibly. Slowly squished to death like the pest you are? That one's the most appealing. And of course I'll bring everyone you love." he said, like it was a decision between a type of ice-cream.

"Let me go, you jerk!" I demanded, adrenaline flooding my veins. I sent a punch at him, which he blocked.

My wrist was starting to burn with pain as Mr. Jones squeezed it tighter and tighter. I fought hard to free myself from the grasp, and he laugh as I did so. Then, he let go, sending me tumbling to the back of the room. Then, I saw my chance. The door was open; I could make it!

I ran faster and faster still, but the door had closed by the time I had gotten there. I sent a glare at Mr. Jones.

"You jerk!" I shouted.

"Why thank you." he replied. He took it as a compliment, which caused my anger to boil.

"That was supposed to be an insult!" I shouted angrily.

"Well, it's not. At least, not for me. Now, since you have so many powers, and you could aid us in many ways, I will spare you if you submit right now."

I had just figured out the perfect way to trick him. I sat down, pretending to submit. I lowered my head submissively, trying to

ignore the pain of doing so, and muttered "I submit."

He chuckled. "Very good, shifter. Now follow me, so you can call off your little band of rebel shifters."

When he strolled towards me, armed with a gun, I stood, and saw the perfect place to strike. I kicked him, knocking the wind right out of him. His mouth opened, but no words came out.

I took the keys from him, unlocked the door, and walked out, slamming the door as I left. I took off, looking for Trinity. Then, I saw her, rallying shifters to fight. There was a noticeable increase in fighting shifters, and I walked towards Trinity.

"We've got an immobilized Mr. Jones and the keys. Let me unlock those chains."

I did so, and Trinity was off, flying to the control panel. She was going to get rid of the force-field, so that everyone could escape.

I glanced at the battle. Blood dripped from the wounds of many, and I shuddered, looking away. I heard an angry yell coming from Mr. Jones's building, and I let a little smirk appear on my lips.

Seconds later, I could hear Trinity shout. "Force-field down! Everyone run!"

If you hadn't known what was going on, you would've though a bunch of animals had escaped from the zoo. I flew out, with Tyler and my father almost directly under me. Everyone was safe - for now, at least - and we were free!

We arrived in the forest minutes later, and I scanned the crowd, looking for Caspian.

He wasn't there.

A/N-

So... did you like the chapter? If you do, feel free to comment, vote, or share this with your friends!

I've got to go, but I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 31

[image] [image]

No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings.

-William Blake

———

"Where's Caspian?" I asked, flying up. Oh no. I was supposed to get him out of the place. Did I leave him behind? My stomach filled with a horrible, guilty feeling, and I trembled fearfully.

"Where's Caspian?" I shouted.

From below, I heard Tyler shout "I saw him limping a little behind us. There were a bunch of bullets in him."

Oh no. Oh no, oh no, oh no. I flew forward, retracing our path. If he died, it'd be all my fault. I looked around. Then, I saw him. He was in a horrid condition, with bullets covering him all over. He let out weak moans of pain as he laid there on the side of the street.

"I'm coming down there, Caspian. Pain is weakness leaving the body. Use that strength to stay alive! I'll heal you!"

I dived down there, glancing at Caspian. His wounds were enough to make me look away quickly. It was horrible. I tried to stay strong for Caspian.

"Stay still. I'm going to try and heal you."

"No, Madelyn. I can't have you do that."

"Why not? You're the leader of so many shifters; they need you!"

"But I fear that you healing so many wounds at once may push you to the point of death. I can't have that happening. Either I make it through on my own, or I die. I can't let yourself die for me. "

"But Caspian, do you know how much I went through to rescue you?"

At that moment, I heard Stella walk up beside me. Her silvery fur was full of twigs and other things. How much trouble had she gone through to get here? Either way, I was glad that she was here.

"Stella, do you know where the shifters are?"

"Yeah. Should I get them?"

"Yes. Get them here quickly; tell them that Caspian is badly hurt."

She nodded and bounded off.

"Stay awake, Caspian. They shifters need you. Without you, there's nobody to lead them."

"It is not up to me whether I live or die, Madelyn." Blood seeped out of his wounds; not a good sign. "I cannot let you heal me."

Ugh, his stubbornness was going to be his downfall. I paid no attention to his request, and placed my hand over a wound. He batted it off, growling softly.

"Don't, Madelyn."

"I need to heal you! It's my fault we're in this mess, and I'm getting all of us out of it!"

He growled loudly at me. "No, Madelyn. It's not your fault. Even if you had told us earlier, there wouldn't have been a way for us to win. They had weapons that we wouldn't have been able to fight." More blood seeped out of his wounds, and I tried to heal him, but he growled.

"No, Madelyn! I can't have you letting yourself die! You don't need me to defeat the hunters. I have faith in the shifters, and faith in you. And do you know how bad I'd feel if you died because of me?"

"Do you know how much guilt I was put through when I thought you were dead? Just a few minutes ago, you weren't around. You weren't with the group. I thought you had died! It's my fault, and I wanted - no, needed - to fix it! I'm sorry I got us into this mess, and I'm trying as hard as I can to get us out. You need to let me heal you!"

"Though I am growing weaker, I will not allow you to heal me. I've lived a fulfilled life, and perhaps it's time for me to pass on."

"But who will lead the shifters?"

At that moment, all of the shifters came out.

"Caspian!" I heard Trinity exclaim.

"He's dying." I explained, tears sliding down my face "And it's all my fault. If I hadn't been such of a coward, we wouldn't be in this situation."

I felt a hand on my shoulder. It was Tyler. "It's not your fault, Madelyn. Everyone makes mistakes. We just have to have the courage to learn from them."

He's right, Madelyn. I'll be fine, wherever I go. Maybe I'll stay on earth, maybe I'll go to heaven. But I don't want you feeling guilty. Promise me that you'll stay strong."

Tears were now coming out of my eyes; lots of them. I looked into his eyes. "Stay alive, Caspian! Don't die on me now! Stay alive! Please!"

"Promise me that you'll stay strong." he repeated, his voice weaker.

I looked at him. "I promise. But try to stay alive. Please! The shifters need you!"

"They'll be fine without me Madelyn. There have been many, many leaders. Another will be chosen."

"Who?" I asked. I wasn't expecting the answer I received.

"You have proven to be strong and courageous, Madelyn. The wise decision would be to make you leader."

"B-but I can't do it! I'n=m a coward, and I couldn't even save you from the hunters! You're dying!" Tears rushed down my face, and I looked at Caspian. "I'm not fit to be a leader."

He growled. "Madelyn, look at me. You're no coward. You risked your life to save me! In what way is that being a coward?"

I didn't look at him. He was dying, and I couldn't save him.

"Madelyn, you are not a coward. You have a strong will, and I heard your determination when you were fighting Mr. Jones. There's a task I've been wanting to complete for years, but I didn't know how. Now I do. Madelyn, though it will be hard, I want you to achieve peace between the shifters and the hunters."

"But I can't! They hate us! They want us dead! I can't do it!"

He looked at me, his eyes seeming to see into my soul. "You can do it Madelyn. You're the one I've chosen to accomplish this. I chose you as leader, when I could've chosen anyone else. It's because I believe in you. Don't let me down!"

His breathing became shallow, and I placed my hand over a wound, trying to heal him. I put my hand over where his heart was.

Caspian was gone.

A/N- Am I the only one who sobbed?

Sorry.

I.

Am.

Evil.

Aren't.

I?

Yes I am.

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you guys in the comments! Bye for now!

Btw, the song in the media is Satellite by Rise Against. Love that song!

Also, Enderwolf989 gets a dedication and mention for his win on Minecraft Writing games. (If you wanna join, season 2 starts on monday)

That's all.

Chapter 32

I always wonder why birds choose to stay in the same place when they can fly anywhere on the earth. Then I ask myself the same

question

___

"He's gone, Madelyn."

"But he can't be! I can't be leader; I'm a coward!"

A hand was placed on my shoulder. "You're no coward, Madelyn. Who rescued the shifters? You did! Who had the courage to fight Mr. Jones, the leader of the hunters himself? You did! Madelyn, I know you can do it!"

"No, I can't! The hunters, they hate our kind! They want us dead! How am I supposed to make them have peace with us?"

"The same way you did everything else." said a voice. Dad. "Remember the motto you and I made all those years ago?"

Of course I did. I mean, back when I was in middle school, he'd repeat the same phrase to me. Keep calm and grind on.

"Yes. But how am I supposed to keep calm when a great leader has fallen? I mean, everyone says how he helped them through hard times. How am I supposed to measure up to that?"

"Because I know you can do it, Madelyn. You're my daughter, and I've seen you persevere through so, so many things!"

"But the hunters are ruthless! Dad, you've been among them. You know what cruel methods they've used to get their ways! How am I supposed to go up against that?"

"You don't have to go up against it alone, Madelyn." I heard Trinity say "You have us."

"And how am I even supposed to lead people? I mean, it can't be an easy task! Caspian was a far better leader than I could ever be!"

"He chose you for a reason."

"What reason? The fact that everyone wanted me dead? Was he even thinking straight when he made me leader? "

"He was, Madelyn." said Tyler, making me look behind "I looked into his mind. He knew you could do it, and he had faith that you could do it. I'm not lying!"

"Where am I even supposed to start?" I asked "A peace treaty? Like that's gonna work. And in a war, we'd lose! Die even! This'll never work."

"It will, Madelyn. If you believe in yourself."

"You know what? I'm going flying. I need some time alone to think."

I glanced at Caspian's dead body, tears streaming down my face.

"Let nobody touch him."

I flew off, my heart aching from grief. He was gone. There was nothing that I could do to heal him. I doubted I could bring people from the dead, and then, wouldn't it kill me? I didn't know what to do. Not in the slightest. From above, I could see Caspian's limp, lifeless body. I remembered the first time I had seen him. He was strong, powerful, and a great leader. There was no way I could measure up to that.

Still, I couldn't just forget his final wish. I mean, he was counting on me. But still, how was I supposed to defeat those ruthless hunters?

"They're not gonna be easy to negotiate with, especially since you

knocked the wind out of the leader."

"I know. I'm not even sure I can do it."

"You have to try, Madelyn. You have an entire group of shifters counting on you."

"And that's not pressure at all. They're all depending on me! I don't want to let them down!"

"And you won't, Madelyn..."

I ignored whatever else she was going to say. Wind blew by, and I flew higher, shutting my eyes. I wanted to be a good leader, because Caspian himself had chosen me. But if I could was another matter entirely.

My stomach growled with hunger. I'd have to catch something to eat. It had been days since I had last eaten, but I had ignored it. Now, I'd have to eat. But eating squirrel?

I landed, sighing. I mean, I had hunted before, but I had given it to the shifter town. To be honest, I was nervous. Not only about having to eat squirrel, but about the much larger picture. Caspian was dead! I had to lead an entire group of shifters, and achieve peace between two groups that absolutely hate each other! And on top of that, there were the things that the squirrel shifter had said, something about a project.

Something involving me.

Maybe this project had something to do with peace between the

shifters and the hunters. Sure, it was unlikely, but I could hope.

My stomach growled yet again, and I sighed. I took off. I was going to have someone to go to a McDonalds or something. I checked my phone. Somehow, it still had five percent battery life. I checked the news app.

Shifters escaped.

The animal metamorphosizers have escaped from WellBorne Science institute. Lookouts are going on all across Haines City. Pictures of the shifters are on WellBorne's website If you see anyone resembling the escaped shifters, bring them to the listed address.

Well, getting McDonalds just got a lot harder.

"You're going to have to hunt eventually."

My stomach growled again. I was going to have to hunt. I shifted into a hawk, turning around. I'd have to cook it first. Then eat it. I looked around, the rapture vision proving to be quite useful. I saw movement, and dove down. Missed.

"Remember, it's not always easy to catch prey."

I looked down, looking for food. It wasn't like I could go to a McDonalds anymore. Those hunters were ruining any chance at feeling normal. Well, as normal as I could with wings, tail feathers, and the ability to change into a bird at will.

I looked around, and saw movement. I tried to stay silent as I moved closer, the squirrel oblivious to me. I swooped down, the squirrel starting to dash away. I grasped it in my talons. It stared at me with desperate eyes, and I recognized it.

It was the same squirrel shifter who had been spying on me my

entire life.

"You." I said, staring into his eyes. I wanted to destroy him so badly, then I realized that he could give me the information I needed. "You're coming with me."

A/N- Things are getting intense!

Anyway, are any of you guys or gals animators? Can you make book trailers? If so, private message me; I have some ideas for a book trailer.

Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 33

"Let me go, you fool!" I heard him shout.

"No!" I fired back. I was going to head back to the shifters, and I was going to figure out just what this project was. "You are going to give me the information. What exactly is this project?"

"I'll never tell!"

"Try and tell him that you're gonna drop him. Always works."

"It looks like my grasp is slipping, slipping, slipping." I said, loosening my grasp slightly as I flew higher.

"He'll break any second now. Wait for it... wait for it..."

"Fine, I'll speak, I'll speak!" he squeaked "Please don't kill me. I'll do anything."

"Told you."

"Exactly how long have you been doing all this sort of stuff?"

"Many, many years."

I dived down, gripping the squirrel shifter. Now, where were the shifters? It was a huge group of animals; it looked like a zoo breakout! Surely they couldn't hide that easily. Soon, I saw them, and I landed on a branch.

"I'm back with a hostage. Tyler, you know who it is."

He looked at me. "Oh, you've got him. Was he spying on you again?"

I shifted back, flying down. "Probably. But I think he knows something. Anyone have some sort of power to make a cage or something?"

A grey and white-furred rabbit hopped forward. She made a cage

from vines, with the top open. "Place him in, I'll make the top."

I dropped him in the cage, and vines rose up, creating the top. She hopped back to the crowd.

"Now, tell me about this 'project'."

"Never! My master has given me instructions to remain silent on this information."

"Mr. Jones has told you to remain silent? Do you work for him? Or has he forced you to do this?"

He muttered something incomprehenseble.

"What was that?" I asked.

"Nothing. My master has given me his order to remain silent."

"Tell me now, or I might just have to take you on another flight."

"You don't scare me, project." he said in a sneer.

"About this project." I replied, trying to seem in control "What does it have to do with me?"

"That is for me to know, and you to wonder about for the rest of your pathetic life."

"Oh, then I wonder how long it takes a squirrel to die at the talons of an owl. Or at the talons of an eagle."

"Your threats don't scare me. We both know that you need me for information."

Is he reading my mind or something? I mean, seriously! Why do people keep seeing through the act?

"Oh, but what you don't know is that I'd also gladly destroy you. Play your cards right, and you might make it out alive. But only if you tell. I'm waiting."

"I'll never tell, pathetic project." he growled. Sure, he has to go and

go after that project thing, making me wonder about that thing.

"Tell me now. Might I remind you that you're the one that's caged?"

"And why would I tell you when I'd suffer punishment if I did?"

"So, you're being forced to spy?"

"Why would I tell you? If I was being forced, I could easily run off!"

This is when Mr. Mind-Reader was needed.

"Tyler," I began "Please come over here."

When he was beside me, I said to him. "You can mind read. Tell me what he's thinking."

A minute or two later, Tyler looked at me. "He's being forced .There's a tracker about the size of a grain of rice implanted in him."

"You don't have to stay with the hunters. I remember how bad it was when I was captured by them. Why don't you just stay with us; we could protect you."

"But it puts you at risk, an punishment is heavy for those escaped. I'm staying with the hunters, and there's nothing you can do to change that."

"Then you can at least tell me about this project thing."

"Never! I would be severely punished for revealing secrets of the hunters! It would be a fatal move!"

I looked at Tyler. "Tell me stuff."

He nodded, and went silent. I paced anxiously, waiting for his answer.

"Oh no." I heard him mutter.

"What is it? Whatever it is, I can take it." I wasn't entirely sure of that, but he didn't know. Or did he?

"It would hurt you too much, Madelyn. I won't hurt you. I refuse to."

I refused to be treated like that! I wasn't some weak little kid!

"Tell me! I can take it!"

"No!"

"Yes!"

I watched him take off, and I followed him. I tried to go faster, faster, faster still, not caring how exhausted it made me. Adrenaline flooded my veins, giving me all the energy I needed.

"Get back here! Tell me what it is!"

"I won't hurt you!"

"And you won't! Just tell me! I'm not some little kid! I can take it!"

I tried to fly faster, anger swelling up inside of me.

"Tell me!"

Determination burned in me, and I went faster. I didn't want him keeping anything from me! I didn't want to live in the oblivion! I had already suffered through so much of it! I didn't want any more!

Soon, he turned around.

"Madelyn, I refuse to hurt you." he said "I know you don't want to be deceived."

"Tell me. I promise; I can take it."

After a long argument, he caved.

"Madelyn, they've been observing you your entire life. They've been wanting to make you a weapon of ultimate destruction. They've snuck in, done injections, then left. They've modified you to take over the shifters. They've given you powers that have the capability to kill many. When your shifter spirit was in her physical form, a

fox shifter attacked her and modified her. She didn't know it; only the hunters did. And they're tracking you. Everything you do, everywhere you go, they know. They're coming to attack, and they plan to erase your memories. They're planning to brainwash you to become the ultimate weapon. They're planning to make you kill your own kind."

A/N- Go ahead, shout at me. Yell at me; I deserve it. All authors are evil.

And I'm not even the worse. I could just pull a Veronica Roth...

I won't, but I could.

Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 34

"B-but how? I mean, how come I never noticed? What exactly did they do to me? How am I supposed to get rid of the tracker? When are they coming?"

My mind was racing with terrified, panicked thoughts. I didn't want to attack the shifters! And I wanted to make peace! For Caspian! How would they brainwash me? Would there be some way to stop it? My heart was pounding, and I looked around. Had they attacked already? Would I need to stay away from the shifters? Would I have to run for my entire life? I needed to get that tracker out!

"Tyler, I need the tracker out. Where is it?"

"I don't know, Madelyn. It wasn't in his mind. Of course, there is a possibility that I skipped over it on accident."

"Then we're heading back to that cage so you can pry into his mind. Let's go."

I turned around in the direction that I had come, and motioned for Tyler to follow. They could be watching me right now. And they definitely knew where I was. I mean, with the tracker, how could they not?

They've been spying on me my entire life. They've experimented on me without me knowing. And for what? To make me into the ultimate weapon. Did I have any say in this? No. Obviously, they don't give a crap about how I feel! I balled my hands into fists, trying to focus just on flapping my wings. I was going to get that stupid tracker out, and I was going to go to that stupid hunter group and give them a piece of my very ticked off mind.

Anger surged through me, and I balled my fists tighter.

"It'll be alright, Madelyn."

"How the heck can you say that? There's so, so much chaos going on! What am I even supposed to do?"

"Hope is a useful asset in the midst of chaos."

"And how would hope help? They want to use me as an ultimate weapon for crying out loud!"

Whatever Ashlea had said next, I didn't hear, because I was focusing on flying. Wind rushed through my hair, and I went faster and faster still. I was going to find out where the heck that tracker was, and I was going to find out how to get rid of it. I was going to honor Caspian's final words.

Then, I saw all the shifters. Everyone was shifted, and everyone was unconscious.

"Dad! Trinity! What happened!" I called out over the wind, coming closer. I looked for the cage made of vines, and it was still there.

Except now, it had a population of zero.

The squirrel shifter was gone. I landed, and I could see some shifters starting to regain consciousness.

"What happened?" I asked "Where did that little idiot go?"

The same rabbit shifter who had made the cage hopped forward "He was using his telekinesis." she began "He was forcing the cage apart, and he did that with every layer of the cage I made. It was taking too much energy, and the last thing I remember are the other shifters going after him. That telekinesis is quite useful. He attacked everyone who went after him. I don't think anyone is seriously injured, but he escaped."

I put my hand on my forehead, anger and frustration rushing through my veins. What was I supposed to do? I sighed, looking down.

"What do I do now? That squirrel shifter is gone. And surely they've put up more defenses since the escapes. What do I do? Go after him?"

"That's exactly what you do. That is, if you're determined enough to do it."

"But that's incredibly risky! What if I die?"

"Then you'll die fighting for a good cause. But you need information, don't you? I mean, I know it's risky, but if there's a place where that squirrel shifter is going to be, it's there."

I sighed once again. Since I was the leader, I guess I had the authority to make meetings and stuff. "I have a few things to say."

The now awake shifters - some shifted, some not - walked forward. "Tyler, who can read minds, read from the mind of the squirrel shifter. He discovered that there's a tracking chip inside of me, though he does not know where." I purposely left out the part about being experimented to become some super-weapon; who knew how people would react to that. "Tyler believes that the information may be somewhere in the squirrel shifter's knowledge, and that he just skipped over it."

Murmurs and hushed whispers ran through the crowd.

I began to speak again. "Tyler and I will go into the hunters building and get the necessary information to remove the tracking chip. It will be risky, but I have been told that it is needed to ensure the safety of you all. I will - however - need back up groups in case Tyler and I are captured. There will be two groups. Stella, Aubree, and Saige will be on one, while Casey, my father, and Trinity will be on another. Now, we will go..." I pondered it for a minute. After all, they could capture me in my sleep. "Tomorrow, but we will need to take shifts watching for the hunters."

The night was a restless one, composed of me tossing and turning,

eventually giving up on the hope of getting sleep. So, I went for a little night flying. It was beautiful, the sky of stars above me. But, soon, the night sky changed as it became day. I woke Tyler up, and we watched the sunrise. It was beautiful, watching the sun creep up the sky. And all that color looked like someone had streaked oranges and yellows together in a beautiful collage.

"Madelyn, if we don't make it out of this, I want you to know..."

"Want me to know what?" I asked curiously.

"Madelyn, I love you."

And then he leaned in and kissed me.

A/N- You've been waiting for this, haven't you? The chapter may have been 2 words short but the sweet moment makes up for it.

Also, the media is by yours truly. I drew it. I probably messed up the wing anatomy, but hey, at least I tried.

And one more thing, I've been running out of quotes about flight, or birds, so if you have any good ones I haven't used, please private message me them! (You'll get a dedication if you do :3)

Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 35

Recap:

"Madelyn, if we don't make it out of this, I want you to know..."

"Want me to know what?" I asked curiously.

"Madelyn, I love you."

And then he leaned in and kissed me.

———

So many emotions swirled in my head, and my heart pounded. Tyler had kissed me! I felt heat rising to my cheeks, and as he pulled away, I smiled.

"You're in love."

I didn't reply, just stared at Tyler. "Y-you do?"

He nodded. "Do you feel the same?"

I quickly focused on building a mental wall, not wanting Tyler to pry into my private thoughts. Did I love him?

"You blush wildly whenever you see him."

"I know." I looked at Tyler. We had spent so much time together, and we had really grown close. Did I really love him?

"You should tell him. Besides, you already know he has feelings for you; what's the worse thing that can happen? And besides, if you die in the hunter's buildings, or at their hands, you'll have never told him how you feel."

I looked down.

"Do you, Madelyn? It's alright if you don't."

I looked at him. "I do. But what if we die in the hunter's buildings?"

"Then we'll die together. And besides, this is important to you, right?

"It is. If I'm constantly being tracked, the hunters will keep on attacking, and there will be no chance to make peace like Caspian wanted." I looked into his eyes as I said this, then sighed.

"I know how much Caspian's death affected you. And if it's important to you, then I'll do it. But I can't help but think; what if I lose you? What if they capture you? They want to use you as a weapon, Madelyn, and I'd never be able to attack you if you were about to kill me. You need to be careful out there. Promise me that you'll try and be careful."

"I promise." I replied, staring into his eyes.

"Hey lovebirds!" I heard a voice shout, and I looked down. It was Trinity. "When are we going to the hunter's place?"

I stared at Trinity. "How much did you see?"

"Everything. Madelyn and Tyler; sitting in a tree. K-I-S-S-I-N-G."

"Trinity!" I said, embarrassed "Say nothing of the kiss to anyone. Go

wake the back up groups; we're coming down. Be quick; we need to get in there without causing too much trouble and without me getting captured. Or anyone else, for that matter."

Trinity nodded and walked off. I smiled at Tyler and flew down. Minutes later, everyone hadd woken, and we were off. Wind rushed through my hair, and I smiled yet again at Tyler. The sweet, sweet memory of the kiss replayed itself through my mind.

"So, you admit you love him."

"I do. I mean; we kissed. It was amazing." I was blushing, a wide grin on my face.

"You're going to need to focus on getting in and out of there without capture or death; alright?"

"Alright. Just let me enjoy these last few minutes before I have to go to the hunter's place."

I looked at Tyler, who smiled back at me. After a moment of us smiling at each other, Tyler spoke. "Remember your promise. You need to be careful, and stay safe."

"I will. And if we die, we die fighting. Can you promise me that?"

He nodded.

I flew down a little, not too close to the ground, but close enough for me to communicate with my dad.

"So, where's that squirrel shifter likely to be?" I asked.

"Since he's a spy, he stays in one of the buildings near the front. Though, there is a chance that they're anticipating the sneak in, so they might've moved him. If he's not in a building near th front, go

inward some to look."

"Thanks for the help. And I'll try and stay safe; can you do the same?"

"I can."

We soon came closer to the hunter's - base, I guess you could say - and I could see the faint ripple of the force-field; they had turned it back on. Looked like we'd have to hijack another van. Odd, how about a month ago, I would've thought this sort of stuff to be insane; for a person with a death wish.

Now, it's what I have to do to survive. What **we,** as a group of a shifters, had to do to survive.

Dad hijacked the car with the hunter emblem on it. As I climbed in, I could see that the driver had been knocked out, and was now in the back of the car, a strand of drool dangling from his half-opened mouth.

After a few pressed buttons, the force field shimmered then dissapeared, reappearing once the car had passed through. Everyone who had come was in the car, and when the car slowed to a stop, everyone climbed out.

"Alright," I began "You all stay here. Tyler and I will go to find the squirrel shifter. If we're not back by - what time is it?"

My dad glanced at his watch. "8:27." he replied.

"If we're not back by around nine thirty, then you all go and find us."

Everyone nodded, and I pushed off the ground, taking flight. Tyler was beside me, and I took relief that he was there with me. I looked near the entrance, and saw a building similar to the one I had stayed in.

"Tyler, I think this is it."

I landed, Tyler doing te same. I approached it, trying to stay silent. I

heard a creak, and then a crash. I stopped in my tracks, looking around for any hunters who may have heard the loud noise. When there were no obvious signs of any hunters, I started walking again. I heard another creak, but this time, it was from Tyler.

"Shh." I whispered "Just because it doesn't look like there are any hunters in here doesn't mean there aren't."

He gave a small nod, and I continued wandering. Darkness was all I could see; and all I could hear were the desperate cries of shifters begging to be set free.

"I see you've arrived. I've been expecting you two." said a cruel, sickening voice. I recognized it at once. Mr. Jones.

A/N- Cliffie. Because I'm just that evil.

There will be another death soon, but who will it be? Mr. Jones? Trinity? Madelyn's Dad? Tyler, perhaps?

No to that last one; I'm not THAT evil.

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 36

I jumped in surprise, nearly hitting my head on the low ceiling.

"Don't play dumb with me, Madelyn Ruth. I know that you're there. Why don't you just surrender, and I will allow you to live. The squirrel spy has told me that you know of my plan, and what my team has done to you. So why don't you just submit?"

Why would I ever submit? I mean, that'd be giving up! And why would I give up?

"Never!" I fired back, hands clenching into fists. "Why would I ever give in to someone as low and evil as you?! I'm with the other shifters! And I will not let you hurt any of them!"

A low chuckle echoed through the room. "Madelyn, you could have all the power you wanted. You could make the ones who have hurt you pay. Wouldn't it be so much better to just submit?"

He was talking in an awfully silky tone. From my previous - I guess you could say obsession - with hypnosis back in grade six, I knew that he was trying to insert some of that into the conversation.

I saw the faint outline of him in the darkness, and I sent him a glare. "Mr. Jones, I know what you're trying to do. And if you think I'm going to fall for it, think again!"

"You're a clever girl, Madelyn. Should have known you wouldn't have been tricked by that, should have known."

"I'm going to give you one chance to tell me how to get this dang tracker out of my leg. And if not, Tyler and I are going to take the squirrel shifter and go." My voice trembled as I spoke, and it was difficult to steady my voice.

Another chuckle ran through the room. "Like you know what I was doing, I know what you're trying to do. You're scared and afraid. Wouldn't it be better if you could just join us? I'm offering you this once in a lifetime opportunity. If you choose this option, all of your pain will just disappear; forever. You can join us; Madelyn. Join us."

"Never! I am loyal to the shifters; not someone as heartless and sickening as you!" I crept forward, the outline of Mr. Jones growing

nearer.

All of a sudden, he lunged forward, grabbing my wrist. I tried to kick him, but he stopped the blow with his other hand.

"Shocked at my sudden strength increase, aren't you? Well, I have my ways."

I knew them, and now I just had dirt on that sickening excuse for a person. I tried to pull away, but he stopped it.

"Won't it just be so relaxing, calming, and relieving to just submit to the hunters?" he asked in a silky tone. I felt a low growl of irritation rising up in my throat, and I sent him yet another glare.

"I am not some stupid puppet that you can manipulate!" I shouted, trying to pull away. I sent a punch flying at him, and he stumbled backwards. I grinned.

Many - and when I say that, I mean all of them - swear words poured from his mouth. His face was twisted into an angered grimace. I was now free from his grasp, and I looked around, looking for the squirrel shifter. It seemed that this place was filled with shifters.

"Looks like some are loyal to the hunters. That's why there are still some here. Because they stayed."

"Why would they choose the hunters when they could be free?"

"Brainwashing. And if you don't get out of here soon, they'll do the same to you."

It seemed horrible, the very thought of being manipulated and never having another individual thought. Kind of like in Divergent. Okay, bookish thoughts away. Why must they choose to make an

appearance now?

I felt a hand close over my ankle, and when I tried to gain myself freedom, the only thing I gained was a bruised hip. I winced, looking over at Mr. Jones. He smirked. He was taking joy in my pain! The very sight infuriated me.

"Let me go you jerk!" I demanded, trying to get out of his tight grasp. I fought the battle between myself and Mr. Jones's fist. Yeah, not the type of thing you'd pay and go to a movie theater to see. I brought myself up, trying to fight Mr. Jones' s hand off of my ankle. My muscles were exhausted, yet I kept on fighting. One finger at a time, I was able to pry his hand off.

"Stop struggling, Madelyn," he cooed, looking into my eyes. "It will be so much better for you if you just submit and join the hunters. Let your mind be transformed into one of ours. Your powers will be essential in the takeover of the world. Join us, and you will have riches, fame, and power. Anyone who ever doubted you; we could have them killed in an instant."

Though it was *slightly* tempting to go for it and have my former bully - Lucinda - punished, it wasn't worth it. Nothing was worth getting brainwashed by hunters.

"How out of whack are you?" I asked "I've already said no, never, and I am not your puppet several times. What makes you think pestering me will change anything?"

"They always submit, Madelyn. Always. It'll be much quicker and easier for the both of us if you give in now."

"I am not going to submit!" I shouted angrily, sending a kick at him. He dodged it. "Now tell me where the dang tracker is so that I can get it out!"

"I am not going to speak a word about where the tracker is. Even if you do somehow manage to get out of here, you'll probably end up killing yourself trying to find where the tracker is. So spare your life, and submit to the glorious society of the hunters."

"A life as a slave is no life, Madelyn. Remember this."

"I will not submit!"

"Then you leave me no chance, Madelyn Ruth."

It was a blur as he started punching and kicking me. Then, everything went black.

A/N- Nobody died this chapter. But when Madelyn wakes, you will see what happens. MUAHAHAHAHAHA! PREPARE TO SOB.

Dang. I'm like the Mr. Jones of literature.

Also, 2.4K reads?! ALMOST 400 VOTES! **OVER 200 COMMENTS?!** *AT LEAST ONE PERSON IN EACH CONTINENT READING MY BOOK?!?! AND ON TOP OF THAT...*

DRUMROLL PLEASE...

166 IN FANTASY!!!

THIS IS OFFICALLY MY MOST SUCCESSFUL BOOK YET.

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR THE SUPPORT! I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU ALL!

VIRTUAL WAFFLES FOR ALL! [::]!

Yep, got a little excited back there. Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 37

I awoke, and all the memories of the previous events rushed back to me. Then, I realized the restraints. I was chained to the wall, and when I tried to get free, the bronze cuffs chaffed at my wrists, bringing a horrible stinging with it.

The room was completely white. When I say that, I mean pretty much everything. Other than myself, everything was white. It was a change from the woods I had lived in for the past month now. I could hear ominous sounding footsteps, and my dread grew as the footsteps came closer. A man clad entirely in white stepped in. I sent him an angry glare, and he smirked.

"Oh, is the little tweety bird upset?"

"Okay, now I see how that had offended you."

"Yes, but we have bigger problems right now."

I stared the man down. "As a matter of fact, yes, yes I am upset. But you can fix that by bringing the squirrel shifter to me, bringing Tyler to me, and letting us out of this place!"

"Like I'd do that. Now, it's time for you to learn a few things, and undergo a mental transformation."

Like brainwashing? As if I didn't know what he was trying to do.

"Oh shut the heck up," I fired back, my voice trembling a little "I will not be brainwashed, especially by someone as low as you!"

"We are not 'the bad guys', Madelyn. The shifters are, and they've tricked you. They've lulled you into a false sense of security, Madelyn, and they've brainwashed you in a way. We're the right side, Madelyn."

"Don't trust him, Madelyn. It's part of the brainwashing method. Don't believe a word he says."

"Wasn't planning on it. Thanks to my sixth-grade obsession with hypnosis and other stuff like it, I know exactly what he's trying to do."

"And even if you hadn't, I'd still be able to explain it."

The man spoke again. "You are not who you think you are. Your friends are not who you think they are. You are fighting on the wrong side."

"No I'm not! I'm fighting on the right side, and there's nothing you can do to change that!" I fired back, anger surging through my veins. I tried to pull out of the restraints, but there was something on them that caused my wrists to feel burnt.

"You are not who you think you are. You are not a soldier for good. You are not who you think you are."

I felt anger flood me, and my hands clenched into fists. It was all I could do not to create Swear-fest 2015.

"I know just who I am. And if you think that what you say can change that, then you're wrong. You're a stupid little idiot."

His face twisted into a display of anger. Then, after a second or two, it reverted back to the usual blank stare that most of the hunters had. I had to stop myself from grinning.

"You are not who you think you are. You are not a soldier. You are not defending the shifters."

"Yes, I am. Now, shut up, shut up, shut up!"

It had taken all the courage I had to make more insults, but oh was

it worth it. He glared, and I noticed that he was clenching his fists. His face was twisted into an ugly, angered face. I couldn't help it, and a smirk appeared on my face.

He stepped forward, raising his fist. "You are not who you think you are. You are not a soldier. You are not defending the shifters."

I would've kicked him if I hadn't been chained down. "Yes, I am."

"You are not who you think you are. You are not a soldier. You are not defending the shifters."

He kept on repeating those words over and over again, and I would've covered my ears. But, I was chained down, and couldn't.

"Try and tune it out, Madelyn. Think of something else to distract you."

I searched my mind for something to think about. Anything would work; I mean, with wacko repeating the same words over and over again, and being stuck here, chained down. This was worse than any grounding I could ever get. Wait - why was I thinking about this? Why was I thinking about these minor things when Tyler and everyone else could be suffering?

I tried to get through the restraints, only to feel the painful burn of something coating the bronze. What even was it? I didn't know.

"I am not some mindless puppet that you can bend to your will!" I shouted "Stop saying these lies and let me free!"

"You are the prized project of Mr. Jones. All the others have died, and yet you've lived. Since you refuse to comply, we must introduce you to the truth."

"The words you're repeating aren't the truth! They're big, fat lies! Now let me free, or you will get what you deserve!"

"Oh, but how are you going to do that when you're chained down? You're no soldier. You are not defending the shifters. You are not

who you think you are."

What did he think he was? A broken record? He sure sounded like one.

"Agreed."

"So, while I'm talking to you, do you happen to know how to stop this burning substance thing?"

"No. It isn't anything I've ever encountered in my entire lifetime. There's a possibility that it was made by the scientists, because I'd know if there was some sort of plant, herb, or related natural item that'd be able to do this."

"Oh. Well, maybe they'll have noticed we haven't returned and send out rescue parties."

"That certainly is likely."

The man clad in white kept repeating his words, and I kept hoping that someone would find me and take me away from this place. The man repeated his words for hours. Eventually he left. And I was left with the very difficult task of falling asleep. I knew what they were trying to do. Sleep deprivation was going to aid them with the brainwashing. And even when I started to drift off, a shock would go through my body, jolting me awake.

It felt like pure torture.

If someone had told me I'd be stuck there for two weeks, I would've thought they were crazy.

A/N- Looks like we're moving into my area of expertise.

Don't ask why I had an obsession with hypnosis, I just did.

ALSO...

151 IN FANTASY! MY GOSH THAT'S AMAZING.

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH!!!

And I'm reconsidering the death. Mostly to spare you the pain, and then BrightnessWings19 knows the other part.

Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

P.S- Please check out DrPepperGoddess's books

Chapter 38

I was growing weaker every day. Conversations from Ashlea were growing fewer and infrequent. And during them, she'd only be able to say how she was exhausted before drifting away. This captivity was taking its toll on the both of us.

My stomach growled hungrily, and I let out a moan of pain. Meals were also infrequent, but usually happened every two or three days. I glanced at my scabbed wrists, the result of fighting against the restraints.

And sleep, I hadn't had it in days. When I tried to, I'd keep on getting these little shocks that jolt me awake. Boredom was terrible. There'd be nothing to think about. And my habit of boredom eating wasn't helping. I couldn't eat, sleep, and my clothes stunk. Two things stained them, and those two things, I won't admit.

In other words, it was horrible. I hadn't slept in so long. About half a week ago, I was able to catch an hour of sleep, but I was still sleep deprived. When were the other shifters going to rescue me?

And then, throughout the entire day, that same man would come in and repeat those same words. It was horrible. I'd rather be grounded than be here, and that's saying a lot.

My wrists burned as I tried to get out of the bronze restraints, even though I knew it was absolutely pointless. I didn't know what day it was, or what time of day. I just knew that I needed to get out of this stupid place, or I was done for.

"I'm... growing weaker. Don't... don't give up."

"How am I supposed to get out of here?"

But she didn't reply. I bet it had taken her all her energy to say those few words. We were both in a terrible situation.

My stomach growled again, a reminder of how starved I was. I fought against the restraints, the miniature battle the only thing keeping me entertained. I figured it was morningish, because the man had left, and I could hear those footsteps coming closer. The door opened with a creak, and I looked at him.

"You are not who you think you are."

"Can you stop already? It has been two weeks! Can't you just let me go?"

"You are not a soldier of the shifters."

"I am."

"You are not a soldier of the shifters."

"I am. Now shut up, please, and let me go."

"You are not a soldier of the shifters." he repeated.

I am. I kept repeating that single thought throughout my mind, even though exhaustion tried to unfocus me. I felt myself growing drowsier, but I tried to jolt myself awake. I was surprised they hadn't been sending those electric jolts like all those other times I had tried to sleep.

Something was off. Well, other than the obvious things like being stuck in this stupid place. I was trying to figure it out, but my sleep deprived mind wasn't much help. I could hear the man repeating those words. It was irritating, and you have no idea how hard I was trying to hold off swear-fest.

I muttered a few insults under my breath, not caring if they heard. I could feel my eyes closing, but this time, I fought to keep them open. This was like one of those all nighters I used to have - alright, still do, well, did until a month or two ago - with Trinity, and I had to stay awake. At those, first person to fall asleep would get their face covered in whipped cream. Except, punishment for falling asleep here could be much worse.

I tried to keep my eyes open, trying to keep my hands up against

the restraints. Maybe it would keep me awake, and though the pain was burning me all throughout my body, I kept it there. It was like touching a hot stove, except that these were restraints. My hands clenched into fists, but it was going to keep me awake. And I needed to stay awake.

The man's words grew louder. I felt a growl of irritation rise up in my throat, and I muttered a few words.

"You are not who you think. You are not a soldier of the shifters. You are not on their side."

So I'm not like nationwide? I silently laughed at my joke. Then, my attention shifted back to the burning of my wrists. It was painful, and I fought against the urge to pull away.

Then I did. Once the pain subsided, it was still sore, but it had jolted me awake. But even that had worn off. I could feel my eyes closing, and I heard the man repeat his words.

"You are not who you think you are. You are not a soldier of the shifters."

My eyes locked shut. I fell asleep.

Soon, I awakened. I could hear the man speaking, and he had a certain confidence in his voice. Was he right? Had the shifters decieved me? I mean, I was fairly certain that they hadn't, but the way that the man was speaking was making me second guess myself.

If they were on my side, and I was on theirs, then shouldn't they have rescued me by now?

I looked at the man, who was repeating those words over and over again. Was I on their side? Were they on mine? And if I wasn't who I seemed, then who was I? I mean, I was fairly sure of the knoledge I had, but was that man right? And what if he was? Then what?

I didn't know what to do. I was leaning toward what I had known, that I was with the shifters. But he seemed so sure of himself.

Then, the rumbling started. It seemed to shake the ground - and myself - to the core. I could see cracks starting to form on the floor.

Then, it all stopped, and someone - actually, several people - bounded toward the door.

It was a group of shifters. Trinity, her parents, my father; and Tyler was leading them.

A/N- Yup. So, if nobody understood the end of the previous chapter, it basically is saying that she wasn't expecting to be stuck there for two weeks, but she was. Just a little clarification.

So, look at the media. You may have seen it in The Rantings of a Pride Heart. Yeah, I made a cover, and I was wondering whether to use it or not.

Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 39

I could see a key in his hand. He smiled warmly at me, and then

looked at the man.

"So, you're the one who has been messing with Madelyn. Stop it. Now."

"You have been deceiving her all this time. You shifters are evil, and we must defeat you."

The man seemed extremely sure of himself, and though I was almost entirely sure that the shifters were on my side, could I be wrong? Was that man right? Was I just setting myself up for pain?

"You're the evil ones!" I heard Tyler fire back, with an anger behind his voice. My dad - who was shifter - lept onto the man, and I heard him snarl. Tyler turned away, key in his hand. He approached me, unlocking the restraints. I had become locked up over the two weeks that I had been stuck in this place, my muscles and joints begging to be stretched.

I let out a yawn, then quickly stretched. I glanced at the man, who had slashes across his face and was knocked out. Then I looked at dad. He had shifted back, and a big grin was on his face.

"Can I trust you?" I asked in a mutter.

Tyler looked at me. "What do you mean? Of course you can trust me. Why would you think otherwise?"

"I mean, I think I can trust you, but the way that man spoke, it was like he was so sure of it. I think you're on my side but..." I sighed "I don't know."

"It's the brainwashing, Madelyn." he glanced at my dad "We're gonna get out of here. And we need to hurry, before anyone else sees us."

Dad nodded, shifting. Yeah, not the most pleasant sight. When Tyler started toward the exit, I hesitated. Could I trust him? He must've noticed I wasn't following him.

"You can trust us, Madelyn. Trinity and I rescued you from the hunters. Think about it; if we were evil, would we have done that?"

He made a good point. I guess I could trust him. After all, he had helped me numerous times. And Tyler had even kissed me! I felt a slight - okay, intense - heat rise to my cheeks as I recalled the sweet memory. Though I wasn't entirely sure - there was still a bit of doubt - I decided to go with Tyler.

"I'm coming." I said, stretching one more time before following Tyler.

"Good," I heard Trinity say "I want to get out of here asap."

We snagged a bit of food from the break room - who would've thought that evil people liked oreos? I doubted I'd be able to make it through a full day on that, after all, I had been starved, but it would - probably - be enough for the flight back.

Soon, we were in the air. Oh, how beautiful it felt to be free again. And if you don't think being outside is beautiful, you've obviously never been held captive.

I didn't have enough energy to do to talk much, or really do anything except focus on flying. The taste of the oreo lingered in my mouth, and it kept me from begging to go to the store and buy food.

Well... I might've asked a few times.

My stomach growled, but I tried to distract myself from the hunger. Well, at least the oreos had helped.

Soon, the forest came into sight. A smile made its way onto my face; I was going to be with all of the shifters, and I'd be home. Well, not home like I'd known, but the forest had become my home in a way. When I was close enough, I landed, drowsy and exhausted. Still, I was free.

"I need food." I said simply "And a change of clothes." I hoped nobody would ask why. Luckily, nobody did. They were all so eager to help me. And it wasn't just because I had been held captive for two weeks. It came back to me.

I was the leader of the shifters. I put my head in my hands, sighing.

Why couldn't I have normal fifteen year old girl problems? Still, I was going to have to deal with it; whether I liked it or not. I went into a secluded area of the forest, got cleaned - which, let me tell you, was no easy task - and pretty much ate all the food I had been given.

Half an hour later, there was puke by a tree.

"You shouldn't have eaten that much food at once after being starved for two weeks."

"You're back!"

"I'm still feeling kind of weak, but yes, I'm back. And you're leader now; you have responsibilities. If you're going to be the leader, you can't be sick all the time. It'd be best to take it easy for the next few days."

"You're right. But how am I going to get peace between the shifters and the hunters? I can't let Caspian down."

"And you won't. I have a feeling this won't be easy."

"Any sane person would."

"But I know you can do it, Madelyn. Tust me on this. But you're going to need the help of the shifters; all of them."

"Speaking of; should I have a meeting or something?"

"It'd be a wise decision."

I flew back to the gathering of shifters. "If I could have everyone's attention..."

All the shifters turned their attention to me.

"When Caspian died, he made me leader. And he told me to make peace between the shifters and the hunters. It's not going to be an easy task. But we'll do it. But before we begin with the planning, I need to know that I can trust all of you. If I have traitors, all the plans will fail. So, if you're a traitor, you might as well leave. We're going to achieve peace, and if you're a traitor, you obviously don't believe in it. If you have any ideas on how to get the hunters and shifters to have peace, please let me know. That is all."

A/N- So, I've been thinking. 122 in fantasy is huge. And huge things should have fandoms/fanbases. But, I can't say I have one until there's been fanfictions written... just a little thought. :3

Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 40

I walked off. What was I to do? I mean, the hunters and shifters hated each other!

"Now think. You're a kid in modern day America."

"So...?"

"Many wars have been fought, and there's sure to have been one that's been resolved peacefully. Pretty much all of them have been. But where, oh where will you find this information? That's right, the internet."

"Right," I went to get my phone out of my pocket, but then I remembered. They had taken it when the hunters had kidnapped me. Great. *"And I would do that, but my phone was kind of, sort of taken by the hunters."*

"Doesn't Trinity have a phone?"

"You make a good point."

I flew over to Trinity.

"Oh hi Madelyn? What's wrong?"

"Nothing, but I was wondering if I could borrow your phone?"

She took her phone out of her pocket. "It only has around ten percent. And you know how fast my phone drains."

I nodded. "I'll just have to be quick then." She handed the phone to me, and I pressed the button, turning it on.

I quickly typed 'How to resolve conflict between two groups that hate each other' and pressed search.

"Of all things, that's what you look up?"

"A bird-shifter can hope. And I'm just gonna hope that it gives me the information I need."

I scrolled through the results, only finding stuff about to resolve conflict in groups. And it looked like it was stuff for kindergarteners.

"Fine, you were right."

Next, I searched up 'Wars resolved with peace.' About then, the phone died. I felt a growl of irritation rise up in my throat, and I thrust the phone back into Trinity's hands. "Out of power." I

muttered.

"What do I do now?"

"If I were back at the shifter council, around now is where we'd take some leisure time to clear our minds."

"Looks like I'm doing a little mid-morning flying."

"Take it kind of easy. You've only just been rescued from the hunters."

"I'll take it easy."

I looked at Trinity. "I'm gonna go on a bit of flying." I then took off, soaring higher. I doubted I'd ever find something as beautiful as flying; you can't beat it. I looked down to see shifters discussing stuff. From what I could see, they were focused intently on it.

"Probably on the challenge you posed."

"Probably."

"So, any ideas on what to do?'

"Sadly, no."

I thought for a moment, then sighed in frustration. It was almost like a little revolution, the shifters rising up to make a change. Kind of like what I had learned about in the fourth grade.

My mind was a blur as ideas swirled through my mind. After a while of silence, just myself thinking, I spoke to Ashlea.

"How much do you know about the American Revolution?"

"You're talking to someone who's seen it with her own eyes."

She had?! *"You have?"*

"I've been alive thousands of years. Of course I have."

"You're immortal?"

"All spirits are, Madelyn. From the miniscule worm, to the mighty lion, all living things have souls, and everyone's soul is immortal. Even if you're no longer tethered to the physical world, your innermost self will live on forever."

"You just had a philosophical moment there. Just saying. So, any details on how peace between the Americans and the British was formed? Like stuff we weren't taught in school?"

"You're talking to an immortal bird spirit. Of course I do. Ever

heard of the eagles that called out at the begining of the first war? I was one of them. Ask away."

"Alright, cooll= little info tidbit down. So, they made a peace treaty and the british signed it after a while."

"They eventually signed it, and part of it is because it was a drain on resources. If you could drain their resources, you might have a better chance of getting a peace treaty signed."

"And what else do we do? Parade up to them and say 'Sign this treaty'?"

"No. I fear there may be some bloodshed involved in getting it signed. The American Revolution wasn't won in a day, you know."

"Now what? So, we've got the plan down, anything else?"

"Tell the shifters. i can assure you that they'll be more than happy to help."

"Even if it means an all out war?"

"Especially if it means an all out war."

THey took it better than expected, and for that I was glad. Thn, I

heard ominous footsteps, and I remembered something. I still had the tracker. I was almost certain of who it was. The hunters.

Chapter 41

My stomach did a flip. How could I have been so stupid as to forget about the tracker?! I looked over my shoulder, and shouted back at the shifters "The hunters are coming!"

Hushed whispers ran through the crowd, and then everyone started shifting. We weren't going down without a fight.

"Remember, try and drain their resources. If you can get them to agree to a peace treaty, then that'd be great."

"I'm not going to let Caspian down." I said simply, then looked at the soldiers. They were armed with all sorts of bronze weapons, from bows to guns. Great. They had come prepared.

"Think what you need to do. They have the weapons, but you can take them away if you're careful enough."

"Ashlea, you're a genius!"

I flew down to Trinity and looked at her. "They have bronze weapons. If we take their weapons, we can win this battle."

She nodded. "What if they attack us as we try and get their weapons?"

"Help here?"

"You'll just have to be careful. Stay out of the line of fire."

I looked at Trinity. "We'll have to be careful then."

At that moment, they barged in and started firing. I flew up, looking around. Dang; they even had swords! A growl of irritation

rose up in my throat, and I felt mad. Adrenaline flooded my veins, and my bones felt like fire. I twitched nervously in anticipation, watching shots being fired.

The shifters were doing a good job, darting all about to avoid the bullets, but as far as I knew, no true damage had come to the hunters.

"Get their weapons, and get away without harm." Ashlea reminded me.

"I remember. But they're looking up a lot; they'll see me. And they'll definitely notice me trying to get the weapons out of their hands. How could they not? And why do they have swords? It's the twenty-first century for crying out loud!"

"It's a brutally effective weapon. Don't underestimate swords, they can seriously injure a person, and leave them slowly dying."

"Oh." I said *"So, how to do you even use one?"*

At that moment, an arrow whizzed by my ear with a startling *whoosh.* I glared in the general area from which the arrow had been shot. I could see a man holding a bow, and aiming it at me. Oh great.

I dove downward, grasping my hand on the bow. He growled, sending a punch at me, which seemingly missed me by a milimeter.

"Give it back.!" He then began to swear. Well, it looks like I found out the main personality of this guy; bad tempered. I tried to pull the bow from his hand, and eventually gave in, and he was left with just an arrow. Which I eventually got as well.

I tried aiming it, trying to mimic the descriptions from 'The Hunger Games'. Count on me to use books in a battle.

It was a failed attempt, and the arrow was sent flying into a bush. I placed the bow at the top of a tree, muttering 'Well, that stunk.'

I looked over at the battle. Blood stained the ground, and dead bodies littered the ground. It was horrible, and I flinched, looking away.

Any fan of 'The Hunger Games' has asked if they thought they'd do good in it. Well, considering my current situation, I wouldn't.

"Madelyn, focus on the battle. You may not be able to use some of the weapons, but you certainly can put them out of the hunter's reach."

"And what are the chances that I can use a sword without practice."

"I wouldn't recommend it."

"And you're probably right in that field. So, just keep stealing their supplies?"

"Yes."

I looked at the battlefield, wanting to shudder and fly away when I saw the blood. But I didn't. I was going to fight.

I looked at the hunters. Then, at the shifters fighting other shifters.

"Brainwashed. They were brainwashed. If you can seperate them from the hunters, the effects of the brainwashing may subside, like it did with yours. However, yours was a mild case, as it had only been a few weeks. It may be more difficult for them to overcome

the brainwashing. But it will be better if you have more shifters on your side."

"I think so too."

There was so much violence. But I was going to stop it. I was going to honor Caspian's final words. I flew above a shifter, trying to get the dagger from his grip. What I earned? Nothing other than a nasty scrape on my right cheek. I placed my hand on my cheek, letting out a scream of pain. I flew higher, feeling my own blood pour onto my hand. It was disgusting.

And above all, painful.

I tried to use my free hand to rip a strip of fabric from my shirt, but it was no use.

"You can heal, remember?"

"Right... I knew that."

I focused on it healing. Waves of nausea washed over me, but I focused on two things. Flying and healing. And I was going to stay in the air, even if it killed me.

Which, with my current luck, just might.

Minutes later, the wound had healed, and the pain was gone. I flew down, trying to get to some sort of weapon. Then, I saw a blur of movement.

Seconds later, I was pinned down, a sword to my throat. I recognized the little jerk immediately.

Speedy McJerkface. At least; that was my nickname for him.

I kept my gaze on him, frantically feeling for a weapon. I couldn't move much, or I could be injured. Or worse, killed.

"Mr. Jones wants you alive. But that doesn't mean I can't hurt you." he chuckled in a sadistic way.

I felt a cold metal against my hand, and gripped it. I pushed his sword away, and he clashed against mine, causing my arm to shake for a few seconds.

The battle lasted a while, but eventually, I heard someone - a hunter - call out 'Retreat! Retreat!'

We had won the battle, but I had a feeling that there would be many, many more.

A/N- Sorry about the short-ish chapter yesterday. School was the next day and it was chaotic.

112 in fantasy! Just saying...

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 42

We had won! After all of the other fights, I had expected this one to end with lots of death, or being trapped at the hunter's buildings. But we had won. We had one!

Wait... what if this was a dream? I pinched myself. Nope, not a dream.

We had actually won!

Then, a wave of exhaustion washed over me. The adrenaline must've been wearing off. I got to my feet, glancing at the small yet burning scrapes on my lower legs. Still, I was exhausted, and I wasn't going to risk falling asleep.

Tyler glanced up at me, a large gash on his cheek. Ouch.

"I'm coming, Tyler."

"You love him, don't you?"

I didn't reply, but a slight heat rose to my cheeks. I ran over him, leaves and vines scratching up against my already-injured legs. I bent over him. It was gross, with blood all over in a smear.

"You'll be able to do this. The worst thing that'll happen is that you'll fall asleep. But I agree with you. It does need to be healed, or there's the risk that it'll become infected."

I glanced at Tyler. "I'm going to heal you." I said simply, placing my hand over the bloody wound. I glanced at him, and a grimace was clearly seen on Tyler's face. I heard him suck in his breath.

I focused on the wound closing. I imagined the wound healing, as if it had never been there in the first place. Waves of nausea washed

over me, and I clenched my free hand into a fist. I shut my eyes and waited for the nausea to subside.

But then, everything went dark.

I woke a few hours later, with everybody above me. I must've grown too exhausted to continue. What about Tyler?

"It's official, you like him."

I looked at all the shifters. "I'm fine, I'm fine." I repeated, getting to my feet. I looked at Tyler, who had been looking at me.

He sighed, probably in relief. "Good, you're alright. You healed me, but then you passed out. Thanks for that."

I felt an extreme heat move to my cheeks. "Thanks."

I looked at the shifters, who were watching me closely. I - feeling well rested, and, to be honest, over joyed at the win - flew to a tree branch.

"So," I began "We may have won this first battle, but that doesn't mean we'll win them all."

Hushed whispers ran through the crowd, and when they died down - for the most part, that is - I began to speak again. "As I have been told before, there will be bloodshed and there will be death. But we're doing this for Caspian." I looked down. "I didn't save him; it's the least I can do."

I sighed, fighting back tears as I recalled the sad moment of Caspian's death.

"I believe in you, Madelyn. Hope and belief are their own defenses, to keep you going when times are tough. Keep your head up, and have hope."

I looked at the crowd of shifters. "If we're not doing this for ourselves, and not to get peace between us and the shifters, then let's do it for Caspian." I remembered what he had said to me. *You're the one I've chosen to accomplish this. I chose you as leader, when I could've chosen anyone else. It's because I believe in you. Don't let me down!* A tear slid down my face, but I quickly wiped it away. I flew down, then walked off, wondering how brutal this war would really be. I could hear the unique sound of Tyler's footsteps, and I looked behind myself.

"Madelyn, I know you're feeling upset."

I looked straight into his eyes. "How could I not? Caspian's counting on me, and whether you know it or not, it's a lot of pressure, to have more that a hundred shifters looking up to me!"

"But would you give up being a shifter? Being able to fly, and having wings? Would you really give that up to go to your boring lifestyle?"

I thought about that for a moment. Sure, becoming a shifter was hard, and I was in a huge mess, but did I really hate it? Being able to fly was the best thing in the world; there was noting quite like it. Oh, the freedom I had while in the air - it was beautiful.

"If you had the opportunity to become human again, would you take it? Would you give all that up because of the troubles you've faced? You're no coward, Madelyn. And this has made you stronger; I can tell. You're going to come out of this battle stronger, and I'll be there with you, congratulating you and telling you that I knew you could do it, because I do."

"And if I became human, I'd never fly again. I'd miss that."

Tyler put his hand on my shoulder. "So, you like this lifestyle? it's a hard one; I know, but it's worth it. In the end, it's always worth it."

I could see the sun starting to rise over the trees, and I smiled. Ever

heard the expression; You can run, but you can't hide? Well, I can fly. And the sky was beautiful. There weren't any trucks or traffic jams clogging it up, and when I was in the sky, I felt - well, free. I looked at Tyler.

"I wouldn't give up these memories. If I never flew again, I don't know what I'd do."

"Neither do I. It's quite the experience, feeling the wind up against your skin as the thermals propel you." Tyler stared into my eyes. "Back when my parents were murdered, I hated being a shifter. I considered cutting my wings off, and never shifting again. Right before I was going to do just that, I went on a flight. And then, I knew that I couldn't give up something so beautiful up."

Tyler flew up, and I followed. I smiled at him, joy filling my heart as heat rose up to my cheeks. Tyler smiled back, and then kissed me.

A/N - Gotta love those sweet moments.

So, as I wrap up this book (just a few more chapters before a conclusion!), I'd like to thank you all for taking the probably very precious time out of your day to read this book, and for getting it to 112 in fantasy. That's shocking, and I never would've thought that people would check out this book.

If you were a fan of me when A CATastrophe was up, I got this idea a while back, near the middle of writing A CATastrophe. The story has special meaning to me, as well as bringing back memories of many years ago. To be honest, this entire book was based off of my webkinz, a stuffed canary I named Tweety (That was her nickname, her real name was Ashlea)

I must've drawn some pictures, because I was flipping through some papers that I was going to throw away when I saw a flash of yellow, and then a - might I add poorly drawn - picture of a girl with wings. I thought of Ashlea.

I kept the idea going through my mind, knowing that it was something special, and I was going to wait until I had a good, solid

plot developed. Many days were spent up in my room, listening to calming music as I thought up bizzare plotlines to use with the main character. But, the current plotline won, and here we are.

I also started writing this because I had seen so many - so, so many - cliche, overused werewolf plotlines on this site, and I wanted to put my own twist on it.

I couldn't have gotten this far without your support. I'm crying tears of joy as I type this, because who would've thought that anyone would've wanted to hear the story of the girl who speaks to birds.

But you did, and I am extremely grateful. Thank you so much for all of the support.

Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you all in the comments. Bye for now.

Chapter 43

I smiled at him, and he smiled back.

"I love you, Madelyn."

I didn't hesitate. "I love you too."

"Madelyn, you do understand that this war will have losses, right?"

"I do. You've told me before. And I'm not going to let Tyler die. Caspian already did."

I looked at the sunrise. The sun was like my current situation, in a way. The sun was above us sometimes, and out of our view at other times. If I were to represent the current situation by the position of the sun, it'd be high in the sky.

"But, there will also be low points, Madelyn." Ashlea paused for a moment. ***"Madelyn, I've experienced war, and it's not pretty. Sometimes, people portray war as the thing that only the brave can do. But many people have been forced into war. War changes a person, and not always for the best."***

"So, you're saying that I need to see the light at the end of the tunnel?"

"No, you need to see more than that. You need to understand that you, or your loved ones, might not make it out alive. And you need to fight, not just for your life, but for other's lives. Promise me that

you'll do that. Even if it means risking your life."

I looked at Tyler, who was looking at the sunrise. We had kissed - twice, actually. Would I be willing to go as far as risk my life for him? As I saw the smile on his face as he looked at me, the answer was simple.

"Yes. Tyler loves me, and I love him."

I heard Tyler begin to speak. "You're right; I do love you. And I'm glad you love me. This is actually more than I could have ever hoped for. Back before I had gotten the wings and other features in my human form - it happened about a year ago..."

I interrupted. "How'd that happen?"

"It's a long story, involving a heartbroken witch and accidentally going into her territory."

"Sounds like a long story. But continue on the first thing."

"I had tried to live among people, so that if hunters came into the area, it wouldn't be as obvious. Sure, the girls liked me, but not for who I really was. And I didn't like that. So I closed off, not speaking to anyone. And of course, they thought I was playing hard to get, and that wasn't a pleasant experience. So one day, I made a decision, one I'm... not very proud of. When a girl got near me, I spoke in their mind, and they'd freak out. It was hilarious, actually. But then, about a week after I had started doing it, I got called into the principal's office. He spoke to me for a few minutes, then revealed that he was a hunter, and I got chased into the forest. And that's the story of that."

He sure seemed to have a lot of adventures. He had taken risks all his life, and the only risks I had taken were reading sad books. Not that they weren't worthy of causing emotional pain. But still, Tyler had lived his life with risk and suspense, and I had just started a month or two ago. I felt Tyler place his hand on my shoulder.

"You can do it, Madelyn. If I didn't believe in you, I wouldn't be saying that. But I truly believe in you."

I glanced at the sunrise, and all the colors streaked together. I then looked at Tyler. "Even if you didn't believe in me, I'd still have to do it. I mean, it was Caspian's final wish. I can't just let him down; I'm not heartless. With you believing in me, I honestly feel that it'll be alright."

He smiled at me. "I'm glad you believe in yourself. And I assume you've been told war isn't easy. It isn't."

I looked at him with a shocked expression. "You've been in war?!"

He shook his head. "I haven't, but my father was. And mom talked to me how he had changed since that war. How he got nightmares night after night. It sounded horrible. I didn't want to go into war, because I didn't want the same type of nightmares that affected my father. But, this is a golden opportunity. If we can win this, there will be peace. And I'll be able to know that hunters killing off families won't happen again. Others won't have to suffer like I did."

I looked at Tyler. It looked as if he were holding memories, horrible ones.

"Probably the death of his parents. It must be hard."

"Do you have any sort of family? I mean, I know you said that you don't, but is there any small chance?"

"No. Like I said, shifter spirits were created at the beginning of time. By who? I don't know. But perhaps it's better for a shifter spirit to not be born into a family, because the person it bonds with is like a family. You and I may not be family by blood, but that doesn't matter."

"It doesn't."

Tyler spoke. "Sorry about that. Sometimes, I just remember the day it happened."

"It's alright." I replied. "So, where do we start first?"

"You need to get the tracking chip out." he reminded.

"Right. And how do I do that?"

"Maybe there will be a shifter who can help with that."

"Alright."

We both went to the shifters, and after an hour or asking around, found nobody who knew how to get the tracking chip out. I sighed in irritation. I was sitting on a log, and Tyler had sat down beside me.

"Any ideas you have?" I asked, hoping just a little bit that he would.

"No." he replied "I don't know what the chip is made of, or how large it is. It'd be incredibly hard to find out."

"I'm not going back to the hunters." I replied, looking at Tyler. Then, I got an idea. "Any friends of yours that happen to know how to get a tracker out?"

"As a matter of fact," he began after a moment of silence "I do."

A/N- So, how'd you like this chapter? I have some exciting news...

HALF A THOUSAND VOTES

HOW...

WHY...

WHAT...

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you all in the comments. Bye for now!

Chapter 44

We flew for a few minutes, until Tyler glanced at me. I stopped, still staying in the air.

"What is it?" I asked.

"We're right above Jackson's cabin. Look."

He pointed to an area below several branches, and I looked. There was an old looking shack. "Is that it?" I asked.

"It is." he answered "He might not be home, though. We'll just have to hope that he is. And if he isn't, we can wait."

I nodded, then landed. Glancing at the cabin, I said "Anyone home?"

I heard footsteps as a boy stepped out. He glanced behind me, at Tyler.

"So this is the girl you told me about."

I glanced at Tyler, who smiled at me. I smiled back, then looked at the boy. "Tyler says that you can get the tracker out of me."

"I can. Follow me."

He walked into the cabin, leaving soft footprints in the dust. I followed, and Tyler was behind me. The cabin was dark, with faint outlines of objects all around me. Then, I saw a dim light appear. It was Jackson, who was holding an old, worn out looking flashlight.

"Sorry about the lack of light." he apologized "I don't get access to electricity out here, so I have to make do with this old thing." He gestured toward the flashlight.

"Why can't you go out in public?" I asked. After all, he did look normal. Even if he did have something, it wasn't nearly as obvious as my wings. He turned around and shone the light on his neck. There were red scales the color of fire, and they shone against the light. Alright, now I saw why. But what type of shifter was he?

"There aren't many anymore, after the hunters killed the majority of them off."

"So what shifter is he?"

"Dragon." She answered, as if it were nothing at all. I felt my heart beat faster, in nervousness.

I glanced at Jackson, who had turned around and was now looking at me. "So... uhm..." I paused for a moment "You're a dragon shifter..."

He nodded. "I have been for my entire life."

I looked at him. "Are you going to... I don't know... shift and destroy me? Because you have the capability to turn me into a Madelyn-kabob."

He face-palmed. "Most dragons and dragon-shifters don't do that. It's those rebel dragons who think they're better than everyone else who burn entire kingdoms to the ground. But I'm not like that."

"Good." I said, relieved. I relaxed a bit, then focused to the more important situation. "So, like I said earlier, there's a tracker in me, and Tyler says you know how to get it out."

Tyler tapped my shoulder, and I looked around.

"He does, though it takes a few hours."

Now Tyler had me confused. "What do you mean?"

"He can remove an item from existence. You know how when you heal, if there's a bullet, it goes away? It's kind of like that. But, he has to be careful, so he doesn't accidentally damage you. That's why it takes a few hours."

"And it's safe?"

Jackson spoke. "I've done it many times, and it's perfectly safe, as long as you stay still and allow me to focus. However, there was a time where someone had came to me and I accidently made them loose a finger. But that was years ago, and they got a prosthetic finger, so they're fine."

I wasn't so sure. I glanced out the doorway, wondering if it was too late to fly out.

"Madelyn," I heard Tyler begin "It's fine. Trust me."

Though I didn't entirely trust Jackson, I did trust Tyler. "Alright," I said with a sigh "Where do I sit?"

"Over there." Tyler pointed at an old looking chair, and I sat down. Jackson looked at me. "Just remain silent and still. The tracker will be out in a few hours."

A thought came to me. "Wait... how do you know where the tracker is?"

"It's part of the gift; if there are any obstructions, I'll feel them."

I nodded. This was going to be a long few hours. I kept my focus on the workbench in the corner, looking at everything on it. Boring, I know, but when you're sitting in a chair, doing nothing for three hours straight, you get bored.

Sometimes, while I sat there in a daze, little shocks would run through my arm. And Jackson would assure me that everything was alright. Yeah, when a dragon-shifter with the ability to destroy

things causes shocks, that's definitely not a reason to panic. Note the sarcasm.

But, Tyler kept reassuring me that everything would be alright, and eventually, I'd be calm again, and go back into that little daze, until the cycle began again. This went on for three hours, until a voice woke me from my thoughts. It was Tyler.

"He's done."

I got up, muscles stiff. I went outside for a brief second, stretched, then came back in. I looked at my arm.

"Was that where the tracker was?"

"Yes." replied Jackson. "It wasn't in there too deep, so it was easier than if it had been in there for years."

It looked the same, and was the same, except for two things. My arm was a little numb, but I was told that was just a side affect. And then, according to both Tyler and Jackson, the tracker was gone. They wouldn't be able to track me anymore! If this had been a few weeks ago, I would've just gotten my closest friends and ran.

But now I had responsibilities. I had made a promise to Caspian, and I wasn't going to let him down.

I glanced at Tyler. "Let's head home. I'm going to say a few things to the other shifters." Then, I looked at Jackson. "Thanks for the help."

"It's no problem." he replied "I hope this battle comes out with the shifters as the winning side."

"Me too."

We flew back to camp. It had transformed, with weapons stored together, and some shifters trying to figure out how to use them. I smiled.

"*We might actually win this war."*

"No, I know we will."

A/N- Just wow...

105 IN FANTASY THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

P.S. The media is the cover for a new book that I'm going to be writing soon.

Chapter 45

I landed. Trinity looked over at me.

"Oh hi Madelyn. Where'd you go?"

I glanced at Tyler, then back at Trinity. "Tyler had a friend who was able to get the tracker out."

Trinity smiled, walking over to me. "That's... well that's amazing!"

"It is." I looked at the wide variety of weapons. "So, I see you've found weapons."

"We took them from the hunters, remember?"

I nodded. "So, how do you know how to use the weapons."

Trinity sighed. "We don't. We're just trying to figure it out. It's not as easy as it sounds in the books. The bows are hard. Speaking of, there's a dog shifter with an arrow in his leg."

I looked at Trinity. "Alright. I'll do that, then I need to talk to the shifters." Trinity nodded.

The removal of the arrow consisted of a lot of whines, whimpers, growls, and other dog noises. Yeah... not fun at all. But after a while, I had gotten the arrow out, and I called the camp of shifters to order.

"So, I see you're using the hunter's weapons. That's a great way to make use of the weapons. However, you might want to be a tad more careful." I glanced at the scratches of the dog shifter's claws as a kind reminder. "Just a thought."

I glanced out at the crowd. After a second or two, I began to speak again. "Like I have said before, this isn't going to be easy. This is war. And as many of you may know, war isn't won in a day. It'll be heartbreaking and deadly for some." I glanced at Tyler, fighting back tears. The thought that I might loose him was painful.

After a minute or two to regain my calmness, I continued. "I'm not going to lie. Some of you might lose your lives. I might lose my life. But we have to remember why we're doing this. Caspian was a great leader. He took mercy on me when he could've easily had me killed. He was... probably the best leader I had ever met." I wiped the tears from my eyes, trying not to bawl and sob. "I can only hope to be as good of a leader as Caspian was."

I glanced out at the crowd. Nearly silent murmurs rushed through, and after they settled, I sighed, remembering Caspian's death. "I didn't ask to have this big of a burden on my shoulders, but now I have it. And I'm going to make sure that his dream comes true."

I walked off, knowing that I was going to bawl. Once I was a distance away, I spread my wings, taking to the skies. I felt tears run down my face as I sobbed. Caspian was good, and I wanted to

make him proud.

"And you will, Madelyn."

"But what if I don't? What if we all die trying and the world is never safe for shifters? What if I'm forced to kill my own kind through brainwash, and I never have another individual thought. I want to do this, and I want to make peace between the shifters and the hunters. With every single fiber of my being."

"Remember what I said? Hope can do amazing things, and if you believe, you can do whatever you want. I know some might say that this is just motivational 'garbage', but it isn't. Trust in me, and above all, trust in yourself."

I wiped a tear from my face, looking down. The memory of Caspian's death came back to me.

Caspian looked at me, his eyes seeming to stare into my soul. "You can do it Madelyn. You're the one I've chosen to accomplish this. I chose you as leader, when I could've chosen anyone else. It's because I believe in you. Don't let me down!"

His breathing became shallow, and I placed my hand over a wound, trying to heal him. I put my hand over where his heart was.

Caspian was gone.

Sad sobs poured out of my mouth. They sounded inhuman, probably because of the pain being renewed. I tried to wipe away the waterfall of tears, but more replaced them. I sobbed even more.

"Madelyn, I think I heard something."

"Can't you see I'm trying to grieve here?"

"I can. But I hear something. Listen."

I tried to soften my sobs, listening. I could hear a faint shouting coming from the town. Were the hunters coming? I tried to get rid of the intense sad feeling in my stomach, and looked around. I saw nobody.

"Maybe it's coming from the town."

"Or maybe it's the hunters. Maybe they've found some other way to track me, and they're coming to kill me, like they did with Caspian." I sniffled. *"I'm going to get a few other people; if it's the hunters, I don't want them causing another tragedy."*

"That sounds like a good plan."

I turned around, heading for the camp. It was busy, with training going on. I got my dad, Tyler, and Trinity.

"I heard something when I saw flying. It sounded like shouting, and it was coming from the town. I think it could be the hunters. We need to check it out. You can get weapons if you want; I don't know how to use them and there's not enough time to learn."

Once everyone had gotten their weapon of choice, we began the trek - or the flight, for some of us - to the town. I looked around frantically, searching for the hunters. I mean, it had to be the hunters; who else would it be?

The shouting became clearer, and I could make out some words.

'Shifters'

'Freedom'

'Madness'

Yep, definitely the hunters. A sickening feeling filled my stomach as we came nearer.

"Whatever it is, we can handle it." Tyler assured me. I nodded, trying to calm my anxious self. When we caught a glimpse of the town, it wasn't what I expected; not at all.

It was a bunch of people protesting shifter rights.

A/N- Because I'm just that cool.

Also, big, big, BIG NEWS! Girl who Speaks to Birds IS 95 IN FANTASY!!!

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH!!!

I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!!

I'M SO HAPPY!!!!

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 46

I looked at Tyler. "What's going on? Why are they doing this?"

Tyler shrugged. "I honestly have no idea." He had stammered a bit at the beginning. I didn't blame him; this was a confusing situation for all of us. I flew down to dad.

"Madelyn, what's going on?"

"I don't know. Tyler doesn't either. I'll see if Trinity does."

I heard wings flap. I turned around to see Trinity. "I don't know, actually. But it looks like they're on our side. Why else would they be parading across town?"

"Good point." I replied, glancing through the trees at the protesters. The fact that they had came out here to protest for us was amazing. Then, I realized where they were going, and I swear, my heart skipped a beat.

They were going to the hunters. The memories of being trapped there roared back to me, and I stumbled backwards in shock.

"You're not going to let them go there, are you?"

I glanced at Tyler. "They're going to the hunter's buildings." I whispered "Do we do something or...?" I trailed off. I didn't know those people, but still, they were practically walking into their deaths!

"The more important question is; do you think you should?"

I dwelled it over. In those cliche stories, the protagonist always rushed into battle. But this was real life. And I could die. I looked down, biting my nails in nervousness.

"What is the right thing to do? I know, but do you know?"

"I know what the right thing is. The right thing to do is to rush out there and risk my life to save all those people. But I'm afraid. Saving their lives would mean putting myself in the hunter's line of fire. And I don't want to die. But if I don't do this, then they'll die, like Caspian did. Or they could be forced to become hunters."

"I know it'll be hard for you, Madelyn. I've been with many other individuals, and they've felt the same pain and confusion that you're feeling. But you've got to have the courage to risk yourself for others. You want to gain allies, and carry out Caspian's wish? Then go out there and help them, before they're killed."

I glanced at Caspian. "I know what I need to do, but putting ourselves out there is going to be risky. Really risky. But if we pull this off, we could gain allies."

Tyler looked at me. "I honestly think we should do it."

Trinity spoke up. "I do too, and we'll have to be careful, or we could die. But, this is something that is gonna help us a lot."

I had to calm myself before speaking. "Then we'll do it." I trembled a bit as I spoke, and I tried to cover it up the best I could. I glanced at my dad. "We're going out there."

"I'll go get the other shifters, in case we need backup." he stared at me. "Be careful out there. I wouldn't be able to bear it if you died."

"I'll be careful," I promised, looking towards the town. This was it. I took flight, my stomach doing flip-flops. I bit at my nails, wiping away the blood streaming from them. Yeah, that's a habit I needed to break. I heard Tyler fly up beside me, and I was glad that he was going to be in this with me.

We flew out of the forest and into the town. Trinity was behind me; I could tell from the flaps of her wings. I saw the streets I was familiar with, and the memories of my normal life came back to me. I held back my tears, looking at the protesters. They weren't inside the hunter's buildings yet; there was still time. Maybe I wouldn't have to get shot at today.

I came nearer, looking down. They held signs, protesting how we had been treated. Well, it was nice to know that they cared. But, it wasn't nice that they were practically marching into their deaths. I landed in front of the protesters, hearing shocked gasps and

whispers.

"You've probably heard about me. After all, news does spread fast. And I know where you're going. You need to stop; you're going to get yourselves killed!"

"But they're being unjust!" I heard a woman shout.

"True, but they're going to kill you. If you stop, then they probably won't shoot. It's nice and all that you're doing this, but it's hard to appreciate the act when it's putting you all in danger."

Was it too late to go back? I could hear hushed whispers ripple through the crowd, and I didn't try to listen in. Would it be bad of me to leave now, and let them decide what they were going to do?

"Madelyn, you know what you need to do."

"I know. But they're not listening!"

"Then make them listen."

I looked out at the crowd, trying to calm my stomach. "I may only be fifteen, but I've experienced a lot of pain these past few months. When I had first became a shifter," I paused a moment, fighting back the tears. "I went to a shifter town. Their leader, a panther shifter named Caspian, could've easily killed me, or sent me off to fend for myself in the wilderness. But he showed me a kindness that I can't repay."

I felt a tear slide down my face, but I wiped it away quickly. "I don't want to tell some sad story and make everyone cry, so I'll just tell it to you straight. The hunters ended up killing Caspian, and I promised him that I'd get peace between the shifters and the hunters. I need your help, and I can't get that help if you're all dead. So please, don't march into death like that."

I looked at the protesters. They all whispered for a while, and then, a man stepped forward. "We'll leave here, but, we want to help you. Tell me what we can do."

A/N- So, how'd you like that chapter? I left you on a cliffie last chapter, didn't I? Yes, I did.

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now!

Chapter 47

I was filled with relief. My speech had worked! A smiled tugged at

the corners of my lips.

"You... you will?" I asked. He nodded. "Alright. Ask the others if they know how to use weapons. We want to create peace, but if it comes to it, you'll have to use weapons to defend yourselves."

He walked back into the crowd. Hushed whispers floated through the crowd, and after a few minutes, the man stepped out, looking at me.

"Most of them know how to use a gun." he replied.

"That's good."

"Really good. We've got allies now. And we have a better chance of winning! This is great!"

I looked at the man. "Alright. We need somewhere to meet up, to make plans. How large is your house?"

"Fairly large." he replied "How many shifters do you need?"

I thought for a moment. We'd need some shifters to defend the town, but I needed some shifters to come with me, in case we needed extra opinions. Maybe fifteen shifters would be a good amount. I didn't want to burden him or cause him problems. And besides, I didn't know if all those protesters would be in his house. I looked at him.

"How many shifters would I be able to bring?"

"Up to twenty, but it'd be crowded." he answered. That was great. There'd be enough room - probably - for fifteen shifters.

"How many protesters will there be? I mean, I doubt your house is large enough to hold all the protesters as well as fifteen shifters."

"And every single protester won't be there. Only a select few. But is

it a plan? When will we meet up?"

I thought for a moment. I'd need time to choose which shifters would go. I looked up at him. "Maybe tomorrow morning?"

"Alright then." he replied, then handed me a card. I quickly scanned it over and saw that it had his address on it. "I'll see you then."

All of a sudden, I heard gunfire. Loud and deafening. I looked at the protesters, starting to flap my wings and take flight.

"Run!" I commanded "Run home! Try not to get hit!"

Tyler and Madelyn were beside me. It wasn't easy, dodging the gunfire, but we managed. Sure, there had been a close call when the bullet almost hit my wing, but luckily, it hadn't. Then, I saw a large group of shifters bounding into town. I'm not lying when I say that it looked like a herd of escaped zoo animals. I landed.

"Dad, it's alright. There was some gunfire, but everyone got out safe."

He shifted back. "That's good. So, you didn't get hurt?"

"No, I didn't. And we've got some allies. There's a scheduled meeting for tomorrow meeting." I showed him the card, and dad looked at me with a shocked expression.

"You met Jeff?"

"That's who that man was? And you knew him?"

"He was a former hunter. But then, one day, he left. Nobody was able to find him. He left me a note saying that he felt bad about what the hunters were doing, and that he had left. I was forced to give it to the other hunters. I hadn't heard from him since that note."

"Oh." It seemed like dad had a lot of stories from back when he was a hunter. I'd have to ask him about some of them when we weren't on the run. "Well, you can come with me."

"Thanks, Madelyn."

"No problem. But can we go back to the forest now? We don't need any more hunters aiming guns at us."

"That's probably a good idea."

We went back to the forest. I looked around, taking in the smell I had grown to love. This was like home. But, it could be destroyed if the hunters came. As I landed, I ran my fingers over the bullet hole in the tree. I sighed.

"It's alright, Madelyn." said Tyler, snapping me out of my daze. "It may be hard, but we'll get peace someday. Maybe we'll be dead by then, but feuds can't last forever."

I looked up at him. "I guess so." I flew up to a branch, calling the shifters to order. "So, as you may know, I had heard a noise coming from the town. I went with a few other shifters, and discovered that they were protesting how the hunters were treating us. However, they were heading for," I paused for a moment, gathering the words. "heading for the hunters buildings. I managed to prevent them from going in, and we have gained allies. There will be a meeting tomorrow with the head of the protesters, to decide what to do next. I will bring some other shifters. So far, there's Tyler, Trinity, my dad, and myself."

I then went through the crowd and chose a few other shifters. We were all set for the meeting, and sleep came easy that night.

The next morning, I woke, stretching. I smiled, remembering that we weren't alone. We had allies now. I got to my feet, waking Tyler and the other shifters. Then, we headed for the town. Tyler was beside me, and I looked at him.

"This is it," I began "We're going to have allies. We might actually make peace."

"No, I'm absolutely sure that you will. Though it has failed before, I have a feeling that this is the time. Peace will be made; I know it."

"Thanks, Ashlea."

We made our way to the house. It was in a small neighborhood, one I would've normally overlooked. I landed, looking at the shifters I had brought. Everyone was here. I faced the door, then pressed the doorbell. I could hear it faintly. Then, there was a dog barking. I sighed. Memories of Halloween and the doorbell ringing and the dogs barking came back to me. It was odd, but not something I dreaded thinking about.

The door opened, snapping me out of my thoughts. I looked at Jeff.

"I guess it's time to discuss the plans."

Chapter 48

We entered. The house looked surprisingly large, yet it had a cozy feel to it. I looked around. A large dog - a boxer, to be exact - sniffed the shifters and I curiously. He then sat down, giving a playful 'woof'. I smiled, then looked at Jeff. He noticed.

"So, let's get started." he said, walking down the foyer. We followed, and I could hear the soft pitter-patter of the dog's paws.

"So, is he your dog?" I asked, trying to start up a conversation.

"Yes. Butch has been with me for a long time. If I had a dollar for every time he's saved me, I'd be rich."

So Butch was the dog's name. I patted his head. "Hi Butch." I cooed. He gave me a doggy smile.

We reached a room. Many people were there, and I could faintly recognize some of them. I sat down, my tail feathers making my sitting position feel off. I looked out. Tyler was on my left, and Trinity was on my right. I smiled at them, then looked back. At that moment, Jeff began to speak.

"We have some special guests today," began Jeff "I appreciate them being able to come today and help us make plans."

Applause filled the room, which faded after a few seconds.

"The leader of the shifters, Madelyn, wants to make peace between the shifters and the hunters, as many of you may know. So, we're all gathered here today to make plans to create peace."

I looked around, wishing I had brought gum or something to calm my anxiousness. After all, this was a big decision. So, I resorted to the alternative; biting my nails.

Jeff began to speak again. "So, Madelyn, do you have any ideas?"

I pulled my hand away from my mouth, wiping away the blood. "I was thinking along the lines of a peace treaty."

"Don't forget taking the hunter's resources." reminded Ashlea.

"Right."

"And, we could take their resources and weapons when they attack us. Sure, they have lots of money, but it'll run out eventually. Or, they might just surrender. Who knows?"

"Great ideas, Madelyn." he looked at everyone, the protesters and us shifters. "Does anyone have any more suggestions?"

I glanced over at my dad. He glanced over at dad. After a second or two, he looked over at me. 'What is it?' he mouthed.

"He's your friend, isn't he?"

He nodded, then looked at Jeff, beginning to speak. "Hi, Jeff."

I glanced at Jeff. "Is that you?"

"It is, Jeff. I should've left with you. Instead, I stayed. And then, when I decided to leave, I was injected and made into a shifter. Not that I mind."

I looked at the puzzled expressions of the protesters. "They were

friends back when they were both hunters."

After a moment of them both reuniting, the discussion continued. There weren't many other ideas, other than mine and 'kill all the hunters'. But that idea was rejected. We wanted peace, not war. Then, it was onto the peace treaty. Several hours were spent on computers, looking up famous peace treaties. I had been concerned that the hunters could be watching our every move and everything that we were doing on the computers, but Jeff had assured me that it was fine.

It had taken a long time, and we hadn't even started writing the treaty when I glanced out the window. It was night. Stars glistened in the night sky, and the moon was full. A question came to mind.

"Ashlea, random question. Are werewolves real?"

"Yes, but not in the way that most think. It's actually the fault of that Twilight series. They had people thinking that they were werewolves, when they were actually wolf shifters. Real werewolves are anthropomorphic wolf beasts."

"Alright, looks like I'll need to be a bit more careful."

"You should."

I looked at Tyler. "It's night." I said simply.

"It passed that fast?" he asked.

"Yeah. You can take a look for yourself, if you want."

"No, it's alright." he replied "I'll go get all the shifters; you can put the peace treaty somewhere safe.

I nodded, looking at Jeff. "It's night; the other shifters are going to be waiting for us. We can return tomorrow."

"That'll be great." he replied "And I don't mind. After all, it is ten-thirty."

I had Jeff store the peace treaty somewhere safe, and walked over to Tyler and the other shifters.

"Time to head out." I said. I walked to the door, but it wouldn't open. I tried again, but it was no use. It looked like the door was jammed. A sudden thought came to me. Had Jeff lured us here to capture us? I looked at him.

"The door's jammed." I said, looking over at him.

"Really?" he asked.

"Yes." I looked at Tyler. "See his intentions." I whispered at a low tone, and he nodded slightly. After a moment or two, Tyler spoke again.

"He's not with the hunters." informed Tyler "It isn't his fault. Maybe it's just a door screw up."

"Maybe." I looked at Jeff "Can you get the door unjammed?"

"Yes. I'll go get my toolset."

"Wait... can't we just leave through the back door, or the garage door?"

"We can." I followed him to the back door, but it was also jammed. My fear level grew. This wasn't some door screw up; this looked like it had been planned. But who was it? After all, Jeff was on our side; Tyler had made sure of that.

"Something's up. Have any of the protesters acted weird, or supported the hunters?"

"No. Let's try the garage door; maybe that one isn't jammed. You know what they say; third time's the charm."

Sadly - and quite upsettingly - the garage door didn't work. But I was sure that this wasn't a coincidence. This had been planned. I looked through the garage, trying to find something that would get the garage door open. It wouldn't even open manually.

I heard the pitter-patter of Butch's paws. And then, I heard a voice. "Having trouble?"

Where Butch had been, there was now a scientist.

A/N- Did you see that coming? You all thought Jeff was the bad one, but it was his dog!

Yes, I did that.

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now?

P.S- Is it bad that I'm looking through my bird guide book obsessively?

Chapter 49

I glared at him, recognizing him immediately.

"Miss me?" Phred asked rhetorically. Yep, that backstabbing, idiotic jerk was the dog.

I looked at him, watching his every move. Then, I spoke. "In what

world would I miss you? You're a backstabbing jerk! You ran tests on me like some sort of guinea pig! So no, I didn't miss you. Not at all."

"Too bad. You know, your powers do come in handy sometimes." Wow, way to say what you mean. Might as well give him one of those bad-guy canes.

I looked at him, confused.

"That ability of yours was easy to recreate. But, of course, if your subject is unwilling..." he trailed off, glancing at his blood-crusted nails. "By the way, Jeff, your dog is lying in someone's ditch."

Seconds later, I heard the deafening sound of gunfire. Sadly, it didn't hit him. A growl of irritation rose up in my throat. Oh, how I wanted to lunge at him and wipe him out of existence.

"He has a gun, Madelyn. It'd be unwise to attack; the shifters need you."

"Alright. But if he gets on my nerves, Butch won't be laying alone in that ditch."

I met Phred's gaze. I saw him lean forward. Then, he dashed towards me, pulling the gun out of it's sheath. I slid out of the way as quick as I could, bumping into Tyler.

"Sorry," I said.

"Little question; what's going on?"

"The dog was Phred, remember, from back at the lab? Now, he wants to kill me." I replied, giving him the brief answer.

A sadistic sounding chuckle ran through the room. I resisted the urge to jump, trying to hide my fear. A shadow moved across the floor, beginning where Phred had been. He had shifter powers now;

that was great. Because everyone wants a villain with a bunch of powers that's difficult to defeat. Note my heavy sarcasm.

Phred appeared, leaning against the cement wall. "Got that power from a dog-shifter. He was a feisty one. But he had to go where bad dogs go; to the death room."

After a minute or two of trying to come up with a good comeback, I spoke. "And I wonder where bad scientists go. Oh right; they're all still alive." I glared at him, watching his every move. "Except, you're the first one that's going to die. On the bright side; Butch will get some company."

"Oh, but you don't understand." he sneered, moving in front of me with lightning speed. "Many have tried to kill me. None have succeeded."

"Look, we have something in common." I said "And we also have enemies. Isn't that reason to get along?"

Cheesy, I know, But a bird shifter can hope.

"Why would I get along with a lowly specimen of a primitive species? We humans are far more superior than you *creatures* could ever be." Alright, insult me normally. I'm fine with that. Swear at me, for goodness sakes! But when you insult me for what I am, or insult my intelligence, you're going to get what you deserve.

My bones felt like there was liquid fire inside of them, and my heart pounded. Adrenaline rushed through my veins, and I trembled. In fear or anticipation? I didn't know, though it was probably a mix of both. I glanced at Jeff. "Do you have a knife or something?"

"They're in the kitchen."

I growled in irritation. I doubted there'd be enough time. Well, I could always wind him.

So, that's exactly what I did. I was honestly glad that Tyler had taught me how to do that. I heard a weak moan of pain as Phred staggered backwards. I smirked. Maybe that'd teach him not to mess with me.

"Maybe you should leave him here."

"And why would I do that? He'll only come back to get me, and get all of us!"

"But isn't peace what Caspian wanted?"

She had to use that against me. *"Fine. But only after he gets the door open."*

"Alright. I know that was a hard decision, and I'm proud of you."

I approached Phred. He opened his mouth, a look of hatred in his eyes. No words came out, probably because I had winded him.

"I'm not going to hurt you." I said, resisting the urge to punch that face of his. "Just tell me how to get the stupid door open. Then, you can go back to that group of jerk-faced scientists."

"Madelyn, we're trying to achieve peace, remember?"

"You never said I couldn't insult him. Though I do think I bruised his pride. And a few minutes ago, his chest."

After a good few minutes of trying to get him to speak, Jeff managed to get the door open. Phred was driven back to the hunters' buildings, and the shifters and I were flying back to the forest. The moonlight shone, and I was certain that I had heard paw-steps. Ashlea assured me that everything was fine. And yes, I

trusted her. Partially because she was usually right, and part because she had experienced more things than I had.

After some flying, I landed, looking around. The camp was busy, with training going on, even at close to midnight. I yawned, knowing that I needed to get some sleep. I sat on the branch and called the camp to order.

"The meeting went well," I began, looking out at the crowd of shifters "There was a run-in with a scientist, but it was handled well, and we all were safe." I didn't go too much into specifics, not wanting to worry the shifters. "We may not be finished with the treaty yet, but we'll get there; I promise."

After a slight pause, letting the crowd murmur and talk,I began to speak again. "We are doing good so far. And if we lose hope," I fought back tears "We need to remember Caspian. That is all."

I flew down, walking to a cabin. As I laid down, sleep seemed to lure me in. My body ached from the fight, and though I fell asleep quick, I did hear Ashlea whisper a word.

"Hope."

Chapter 50

Morning came all too quickly, the sun shining through tiny holes. I stretched, letting out a yawn as I stepped out. Tyler was in a tree, smiling down at me.

"We're going to Jeff's house." reminded Tyler.

"I just don't that Phred doesn't make an appearance. Yesterday was plain horrible."

Tyler flew down. "It'll be fine, Madelyn."

"I hope so."

Soon, everyone had woken, and we started off towards Jeff's house. I was relieved when it came into view. As I landed, I allowed my mind to wander. It stumbled upon a certain question, and a memory.

"Ashlea?"

"Yes?"

"Remember when Tyler read that squirrel shifter's mind, and he had said that I had been altered, and made some sort of super-weapon?"

"Of course I remember."

"Do you happen to know what they did to me?"

"No. You could go into the hunter's database, or into their main building, and find that information, but it'd be incredibly risky."

It may have been dangerous, but I had been doing dangerous things for months now. *"How far away is the main building?"*

"Somewhere in Mexico." replied Ashlea.

"How?"

"The hunters in this area are just a mere portion of all the hunters across the world. Their main base is where they meet to discuss important plans, and related things. It's heavily guarded; I know this from experience."

Even if it wasn't dangerous, there was no way I was going to Mexico. How long would that even take?

Tyler tapped my shoulder, snapping me out of my thoughts. In front of me was Jeff.

"Come in," he began "I assure you, that Phred guy is back with the hunters."

"Why couldn't you take him to the police?"

"From what I know, the police have been tricked into joining the hunters."

That was great. Note my heavy sarcasm. I stepped in, sitting down at the table. We got started quickly, discussing how things would work and what would happen if there were conflicts. It was

complex, discussing all the different ways things could go. How people had managed this before baffled me. But, we kept at it. It was for Caspian.

I kept repeating those words throughout my mind whenever I got distracted. *For Caspian, for Caspian, for Caspian.* It helped keep me focused, but whenever someone suggested a snack break, I didn't refuse.

At one point, someone pointed out that it was bad that me, a teenage girl, was leading the shifters instead of someone more experienced. I wasn't expecting this. People usually didn't object to teen leaders in books. But, this wasn't one of those cliché books. This was real life, and I was going to have to learn to live with its harshness.

After an hour-long debate, we got back to work.

Before I knew it, it was night. Luckily, there weren't any jammed doors or scientists disguised as dogs. Though that didn't stop me from looking. Soon, we were out in the cool night. The breeze ran through my hair. It was nice to have some beauty in the middle of all this chaos. I glanced back at my wings, looking at the feathers and the way they overlapped. A few months ago, I never would've thought this would be possible, much less happen to me. But it had, and I was glad for that.

Sure, sometimes the chaos caused pain and heartbreak, but being able to fly; it was beautiful.

Many days passed after that, and we spent them at Jeff's house, planning out the peace treaty. We even planned out how we would get it to the hunters, and what we'd do if they refused it. That one was likely. And so, we kept on taking their supplies. Sometimes, there'd even be raids on the hunters, taking their items and using them against the hunters. But more weapons came in, as we soon saw. They were from the hunter's main building, all the way over in Mexico.

It was frustrating.

We all knew that we'd have to attack there soon, but I tried not to bring it up. They had many, many hunters there; who knew what tragedy would happen if we all barged in there?

Of course, the threat was growing in Haines City, where we stayed. Hunters from all across the world were sent in. There weren't many fatalities, as I was able to heal the worst of the wounds before passing out from the effort. I understand that teens my age need sleep, but it felt like too much sleep.

One day, a couple of days after the latest battle, Tyler walked into the cabin.

"Hi Tyler," I begin "What's wrong?"

"Why do you think that something's wrong?" he asked, looking up at me.

"Why else would you be in here? Normally, if you wanted us to hang out, you'd just call down to me when you were flying."

"Alright, you've got me. I was thinking. Our force is... well, it's small compared to the hunter's soldiers, even if we have the protesters on our side."

Tyler did make a good point. I looked out the doorway, looking at the shifters, then remembering the massive army of hunters. Yeah, he was right.

"So, what do you think we should do?" I asked, hoping he had an idea.

A sigh escaped his mouth, giving me all the answer I needed.

"So, you don't have an idea."

"I don't." he admitted "Though we could go into the town and recruit some people to help us."

"Except that we don't know exactly how many hunters there are. There could be millions. We'll need more than just the volunteers from this town/"

I thought for a moment. I mean, it wasn't like I had a bunch of money and just make a commercial. And even if I did, it'd be risky.

"You're a teen in the twenty-first century. Now think; what do you do?"

And then, I knew what she was suggesting. "The internet."

A/N- So, guess what?

This book only has a few more chapters before its end, and I just figured out an amazingly sad ending. I'd tell you more, but I don't want you predicting the ending. And TheMemeGuardian, please don't tell.

On a totally unrelated note, I got Windows 10. :3

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now

Chapter 51

It would've been a good plan, except for the fact that my phone was entirely out of power, and Trinity's phone was almost out, if it wasn't already.

"What did you say?"

"The internet. News can spread like wildfire there. Except that my phone is out of power, and Trinity's is too."

I thought to my tablet. A pang of sadness stuck me. The tablet that I had spent months saving up for was probably broken, or burned. I looked up at Tyler.

"Oh," he began "So, we'll just need to ask someone to use their phone."

"Or computer." I added. At that moment, I heard the flapping of wings. It was Trinity. She must've seen my distressed expression.

"What's wrong, Madelyn?"

"I was thinking that we could use the internet to get help, but my phone is out of power, your phone is out of power, and my tablet is

either burnt or broken. It was in my bag, which was at the old hunter town."

"Can't you go to the library?" she asked "You know, they have computers there. And they don't filter what you can go on."

I was about to respond with 'Great idea!' when a thought struck me. "But can't they monitor what you go on? They'd know that it's me. And besides, everyone knows what I look like. Does it look like I want to be captured?"

"No, but I think we'll have to take this risk. It's a great idea, and it's our only chance."

"So, are you saying that I disguise myself? With what?"

"Well, there might be some berries or something that you could use to add coloring to your hair. It's a lighter color, which might help."

I glanced at my hair, then decided. It was actually quite the easy decision.

"Alright, but what about my wings?"

Trinity sighed, a look of focus forming on her face. Then, she spoke. "We could just get a large coat and hope nobody notices the two large lumps." she suggested.

"What's the chance of that working?"

"It could work, if you don't draw too much attention to yourself."

"Well, maybe it'd work. Maybe the librarian will be reading, and won't see me come in. I mean, when I'm reading, I don't give a crap about what's going on around me."

After a long session in which I used old clothes and attempted to sew them together and make a really large coat, and an even longer session which involved cutting and dying my hair, we went to the library.

Just as I suspected, the librarian was reading. I glanced at the cover, seeing one of John Green's novels.

"Focus, Madelyn."

I sat down at the computer, opening the browser. I typed 'WritePad' into the search bar, and logged in. I began typing a long explanation,

'So, you've probably heard in the news about the girl with wings. Madelyn Ruth. And though I promised myself I wouldn't put my real identity on the internet, it's important. Because I'm Madelyn Ruth.

Call me a liar if you want, but it's true. And I need help.

I want to make peace between the hunters - the ones hunting my friends and I - and the shifters. But they've been sending in many, many hunters. It's been overwhelming. And I thought 'What better way to get help than the internet?' So, I'm calling on you for help.

I don't care if the hunters see this, they already know I'm here. But we're in Haines City. And I would deeply appreciate if you came to help.'

I copied the note, and then put the chapter up. I opened a new tab, going onto Facebook. Yes, I had one. I pasted the note, and went onto Twitter. That was harder. How was I supposed to put all of that important information into one hundred and sixty characters? So, I did what I had to do. I resorted to text talk.

'I'm Madelyn Ruth," I began 'I need ur help.' I shuddered, hating to have to use text talk. But soon, that trainwreck in a hundred and sixty characters was over, and I went onto YouTube. Sure, I had a measly eleven followers. But, I could hope.

I went onto every social media site I could think of, from Pinterest to MySpace. Sure, it wasn't popular, but I could try. I could most definitely try.

My fingers felt numb from typing; I didn't even know I could feel that way. But I kept on doing it. After thirty four sites had been done, I glanced at the time. It was four twenty-five, just five minutes until the library would close.

I cleared the history - sure, it could be retrieved, but it was just a little precaution, in case the library staff decided to go scrolling through the computer history. I was about to leave the library when a book caught my eye. I swear, books will be the death of me.

I took the book from the shelf, running my fingers over the beautiful cover. It was the final book in the Heroes of Olympus series. I hadn't gotten around to reading it; mostly because I had heard it was filled with feels.

"The library is closing." said a voice, snapping me out of my daze. I turned around.

"I'll be going now." I replied. Then, I heard a gasp.

"It's the shifter!"

Like I said, books will be the death of me. I started towards the entrance, but something blocked my way. It was some sort of wolf-man creature.

"Werewolf. It's a werewolf. But how one managed to shift in plain daylight is unknown to me."

A vicious sounding snarl escaped it's lips. "Hello, Madelyn Ruth," he growled "It's me again. Your old buddy, Phred."

Oh, it was that jerk. I threw the jacket off, trying to go around him.

"Be careful, Madelyn. Werewolves fangs can poison, or curse one into being a werewolf."

Phred blocked my way. "Not so fast, little shifter."

He came nearer, and was about to bite me. I closed my eyes, bracing myself for the pain.

The pain that never came. A man clad in all white dived in front of me, taking the bite. When he looked at me, I recognized him. It was the man who had tried to brainwash me.

"Go, Madelyn. The feud is wrong. They've began doing horrible things to the hunters, trying to make them superweapons, or corrupt their minds. It needs to be stopped."

His eyes dulled, and it looked like he was about to pass out. "Go! Save yourself! It's too late for me."

He collapsed. Phred glared at me, a growl rippling through the library. I backed away, then flew out.

A/N- Who saw that twist coming?

Nobody?

Also, if you hadn't seen, I'm removing Magic and Shifting from Wattpad on the 31st. It won't be gone forever, it'll still be in my drafts. Whether I bring it back some day or not is unclear. I am sorry. If you want to know why I'm taking it off, read the post on my profile.

Please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you all in the comments! Bye for now.

P.S- I'm like Madelyn in the sense that books will be the death of me. Who else is that way?

Chapter 52

As I flew away, I kept stealing glances at the library. That man, even though he had tried to brain wash me, he had turned around. He had sacrificed himself for me.

"Nobody is entirely evil, Madelyn. Even if they're mostly evil, everyone has at least one little speck of good in them. The same goes for good people. It's a balance, Madelyn. Nobody is entirely good, but nobody is entirely evil, either."

"How'd he even know that I was there? And how did he manage to come in at just the right moment?" I put my hand on my forehead. *"That must've taken a lot of courage."*

"It must've. But sometimes, when the moment is right, that's when we find that speck of courage inside of us. Then, it can grow, causing a person to stand up to the problem, and help where it's needed."

"Have you ever experienced that?" I asked, curious.

"Many, many times. Almost everyone has felt that courage and bravery sometime in their lives, and chosen to act. A hero isn't fearless, Madelyn. A life without fear would be a very short life. But a hero has the courage to face their fears."

"Do you think that my moment will come soon?"

"I'm absolutely certain of it, Madelyn."

I glanced back at the library, appearing to grow smaller. He was probably lying there, dead or transformed into some sort of ferocious man wolf creature. I wanted to help him, since he had helped me.

"It'd make his loss all for nothing, Madelyn. You can't go back. You can't change what happened."

I looked down, then up as I made my way back to the forest. I had gotten the information up on the internet; that task had been accomplished. But that man had died. Or turned into a man beast.

"Werewolf." corrected Ashlea ***"They're called werewolves."***

"Right. And I know that. But don't normal werewolves - the man wolf ones - lose their minds under the moon?"

"They do. Werewolves are dangerous creatures. Whenever they shift - and they can shift when they want to - it takes a large amount of willpower to keep themselves under control. I've heard it takes years to master that. So I don't know how Phred was able to do it so easily. Possibly something the scientists made."

I was nearing the forest now. I could hear soft murmurs coming from camp, and I landed. The image of the man flashed into my mind. He had saved my life, and I didn't even know his name!

Tyler walked beside me. "What's wrong. Madelyn?"

Then, I could feel a faint tug, and I realized what Tyler was doing. I

formed a wall, starting to block him out. But he had gotten what had happened.

"Madelyn, I know you feel bad about what happened..."

I interrupted. "Who wouldn't? He died for me! That, or became some sort of horrific wolf man beast!" I shouted, gaining the attention of the entire camp. "We need to do something." I whispered to Tyler, hoping nobody else would hear. "They've been experimenting on the hunters. They've been dying because that head hunter wants to make them supersoldiers, probably because of what happened with me."

"And Phred was sent out to kill you. I know. That, or turn you insane. They were planning to send you onto the shifter town after they made you insane."

"Wait, how do you know that?"

"There's a spy here. And I know who it is."

I looked around. Anybody could be a spy. Anybody at all.

Then, I heard the loud, deafening bang of gunfire. A man stepped forward.

"Phred." I snarled, anger surging through me.

"Oh, Madelyn Ruth, isn't it? Of course it is. Everyone knows your name. And someday, you'll just be some faded memory of a dead person."

He shifted into the werewolf. I flew upwards, hoping I'd be safe. I wasn't. He changed again, this time, into a combination of an eagle and a lion.

"A Griffin."

"I know that."

He flew upwards. I saw a knife laying in a tree. I flew backwards, grasping it in my hands. I now had a weapon.

But Phred had incredibly large talons. Oh great. I flew out of the way as he tried to strike me with one of his talons, almost getting clawed. I moved forward, and he snapped at me, his beak a single centimeter from my face. It was at that moment that I resorted to taunts.

"Hey fish-breath," I taunted, because honestly, that's what his breath smelled like. I flew backwards. "I'm over here."

He let out a shriek, coming towards me. I grasped the knife firmly, the blade glinting in the light. When he reached me, I moved it in his direction, giving him a gash on his cheek, which infuriated him. I smiled. He was going to feel all the pain I had felt when he had hurt me.

"Madelyn, thoughts of vengeance and revenge can corrupt a person."

"I know. But it'd be nice if he could feel what I've been put through."

"And you may have to end his life, if he attacks the other shifters. But please, don't try to kill him out of pure vengeance."

I looked back at Phred, his golden eagle eyes sending a glare my direction. He was huge, but I'd need to defeat him. I came his direction, my blood feeling ablaze with the adrenaline rush. I tried to knock him out of the sky. Well, I just ended up face planting in lion-mane. He shrieked again, one of his talons scraping my leg. I flew back, glancing at the wound. It was ugly, bleeding, and painful, but I was in a fight. And since it wasn't fatal, I didn't want to risk another attack as I healed it.

I came at Phred, knife in hand. I managed to get through the lion

mane, and blood poured out of the wound. Phred looked dizzy, and landed. With a shriek of pain, he collapsed.

"I'm sorry." he began "This is the end for me."

I stayed above him. "It wouldn't be, if you had just left the hunters."

"I was forced to stay." he said, his voice weak. Phred coughed up blood "I was forced by my parents. And they... they were going to kill me if I left. But I did. I went to the lab, where they said they could protect me. But the work changed me. And then, I was forced to... rejoin the hunters. I never... never wanted this life. But this is the way I... I will die. I should've.... should've left."

He coughed up more blood. "Tell my parents... tell them that this... needs to sto-"

He took one last breath of air, then died.

A/N- MUAHAHAHAHAHAHA

I IS EVIL

I'M LIKE THE MR. JONES OF LITURATURE

ACTUALLY, THE HEAD OF THE HUNTERS.

HE'S COMING IN SOON

AND I PROMISE YOU

IT WON'T BE PRETTY

Also, I have a question. If this was a movie, who would play what character? I know Madelyn would be played by Willow Shields if this was a movie. I don't know many other actors. I only know the ones who are in the Hunger Games and Divergent movies.

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you in the comments. Bye for now.

Chapter 53

I glanced at Phred's dead body, and the knife - the knife that I had wielded - that had ended his life. Sure, I may have had to do it, to protect the shifters, but he was innocent. Wasn't he?

"Sometimes, Madelyn, pressure and threats can bring out the worst in a person, and cause them to do horrible things that they would have never done in other situations."

"I know." I thought back to fifth grade, when the passcodes to the computer accounts were a simple birthdate, and Trinity had been pressured into going into her crush's account. It was true. Pressure made people do horrible things. *"Do you truly think that Phred was evil?"*

"It is hard to say. But chances are it was pressure that made him do all of those things. Pressure and the feeling of being under constant fear."

I felt Tyler place his hand on my shoulder. "Madelyn, it's alright. He was going to hurt us all if you didn't."

I sighed. "And I know that. But if he had been given the chance to talk and let us know the truth, then this could've been avoided."

I looked back at the shifters. Hushed murmurs ran through the crowd, but I didn't care.

"He could have lived if we had talked it out," I said "It wasn't his fault."

Tyler looked me straight in the eyes. "We'll get through this. But remember; this proves that not all of the hunters accepted their job willingly. There are good hunters, ones who are on our side but are too afraid to speak up."

"Do you think they'll help us when the battle happens?"

Ashlea and Tyler spoke at the same time, both saying 'yes'.

We got to work, with the rabbit shifter making a large hole, which we buried Phred in. I looked up at the willow tree that marked where Phred had been buried. He hadn't been saved; I had killed him. But maybe the other hunters wouldn't have to suffer the same fate.

Over the course of several weeks, many, many people came to Haines City, willing to help. The majority of them were adults, and most knew how to use a gun. I hoped it wouldn't come to all out shooting; that would be horrible.

We continued with raids, stealing their supplies in the night. If they were weaponless, they'd be less likely to attack, and more likely to surrender, and sign the peace treaty.

Speaking of the peace treaty, it was being safely held at Jeff's house, out of the way and hidden. When the time came, it'd get signed. Whether it was in my lifetime, or another person's lifetime. Like Ashlea said; feuds can't last forever.

Practice for battle was going on at camp, every shifter and every person working hard to become as skilled as the hunters. The hunters had powers now, thanks to the scientists. It wasn't going to be easy. But I didn't need easy. I just needed possible. And this was possible. We were going to persevere, and we were going to win.

I looked down at the camp from above. I heard the sound of my wings flapping as I kept myself in the air. It was almost time. The hunters weren't going to get more weapons for a few more days. They still had some, just not enough. It was the perfect time to attack.

Well, there never would be a perfect time to attack, as I was dreading it, but we had a good chance of winning if we went now. I sighed, knowing that I'd have to get everyone and go to the hunter's base. And after that, go to Mexico to propose the treaty... again.

I landed, calling the camp to order.

"The hunters are short on weapons," I began "because of our raids. This is the best time to attack. Grab your supplies; we're going to the hunters' base."

Alright, maybe it wasn't the greatest idea to spring it on them that quickly and that fast, but I did what I did. After around half an hour, we were ready. I took to the sky, Tyler on my left, and Trinity on my right. I looked out in the general direction of the hunters' buildings. We stood an actual chance this time.

We arrived, and opened the force field. How? Well, a month ago, someone hijacked a hunter's car. Enough said. I flew in, armed with a spear. That, and a knife. Why not anything else? You can blame that on an incident in which I tried to be like Katniss and somehow ended up with an arrow hitting Trinity's butt.

Someone fired an arrow at me, and I dodged it. I had gotten fairly good at dodging bullets, arrows, and anything else someone might hurl up at me. Tyler was below me, fighting off some sort of supersized falcon. But he looked like he was doing fine, and sure enough, seconds later the huge falcon flew off.

Wow. A supersized falcon. What next? 'Fluffy'? Yes, yes I did make a book reference. I made sure I had both weapons, then headed towards Mr. Jones's building. The door was open. Maybe he had been expecting me?

He was. "Hello, Madelyn Ruth. I see you've come."

He stepped forward, a flame burning bright in his hand. He glared at me, so, I did what any teen would do.

I used insults I had found on the internet. Some of them were quite hilarious.

"One wishes to acquaint your facial features with a fundamental item used in building." Translation; I want to hit you with a brick.

Apparently, he had seen that too, and sent a stream of fire my way.

"Wow. Looks like you missed *again."*

He sent another stream of flames my way, and they were so close, I could feel the heat radiating off of them.

Another stream of flames were sent my way, and it was about to hit my face. They were too close to fly away. Then, a spray of water made the flames die.

"Stop!"

A/N- How did you like that? Now, let me take you into rant-landia.

Now, many of you have heard me mention the Animorphs series before. And I do it because of the utmost joy I have found while reading these books. I've been reading the Animorphs series for almost 2 years now, because of how long the series is. While you might find 54 books to be a large amount for a series, I believe that they help guide the books along.

But I have a question for you. How many of you have read Allegiant. A lot of you, right? And the sadness in the books portrays how war and battle causes loss and pain. Well, the Animorphs does that, and it does it good.

The Animorphs series is (And I'm quoting this from Wikipedia) an English language science fiction series of young adult books written by K. A. Applegate and published by Scholastic. It is told in first person, with all six main characters taking turns narrating the books through their own perspectives. ***Horror, war, dehumanization, sanity, morality, innocence, leadership, freedom, and growing up*** are the core motifs of the series.

Look at that right up there. Look at the bolded print. HORROR. Lots of it. WAR. Lots of it. DEHUMANIZATION. You can take that in more ways than one. SANITY. And deciding if the choice you made is the right one. MORALITY. There is lots of inner conflict.

INNOCENCE. And losing it. LEADERSHIP. FREEDOM. AND GROWING UP.

NOW SOMEBODY EXPLAIN TO ME WHY THIS SERIES ISN'T MORE POPULAR.

K.A. Applegate, the author of the Animorphs books, doesn't speak down to her readers. She doesn't sugarcoat the harsh brutalities of war, and its affects on people. I've accidentally gotten spoilers for the last book, and... well, you'll just have to see.

But what's this series about? You ask. Well, I'll tell you.

(Quoted from Wikipedia)

The story revolves around five humans, Jake, Marco, Cassie, Rachel, and Tobias, and one alien, Aximili-Esgarrouth-Isthill (nicknamed Ax), who obtain the ability to transform into any animal they touch. Naming themselves "Animorphs, they use their ability to battle a secret alien infiltration of Earth by a parasitic race of aliens resembling large slugs, called Yeerks, that take humans as a host by entering and merging with their brain through the ear canal. The Animorphs fight as a guerilla force against the Yeerks, led by Visser Three.

Interesting, huh? Do you want to check it out? Because if you do, I swear it will not be a waste of your time. If you read it, chances are you will remember it as one of the best book series you've read in your entire life.

THIS IS A BOOK ABOUT WAR, BATTLE, AND FREEDOM. AND IN THE MIDST OF WAR, PEOPLE CAN CHANGE. (Animorphs pun right there) PEOPLE CAN DOUBT THEIR SANITY, OR EVEN LOSE IT. THIS ISN'T YOUR HAPPY GO LUCKY BOOK ABOUT ROMANCE. IT TELLS YOU THE HARSHNESS OF WAR, BUT IF YOU READ IT, YOU WILL **NOT** REGRET IT. THIS BOOK HAS HELPED ME IN SO MANY WAYS, WHETHER IT IS MY WRITING, OR MY FEELINGS.

I ABSOLUTELY LOVE THIS SERIES, AND I KNOW THAT YOU WILL LOVE IT TOO. THE BOOKS MAY BE A BIT HARD TO FIND, BUT I SWEAR, YOU WILL LOVE THEM.

There. That is a rant I've had for a LONG time.

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now.

Chapter 54

It was Trinity. I looked at her, absolutely astonished.

"How...?"

"My power was revealed," Trinity replied simply.

Mr. Jones began to speak. "She may have saved you this time, but I am still concious." He came at me, armed with flames that blazed about an inch above his palm. A feiry madness seemed to burn in his eyes.

"You have had FAR too many chances, Madelyn Ruth. Like a canary in a coal mine, it's time for you to stop singing."

Was that a catch phrase or something? Because that wasn't the first time he had said that to me.

A ball of flames were sent my way. I dodged them, but just barely. "How do I beat him?" I called out over my shoulder.

"Fight fire with water." she replied. I looked at her, confused. Wasn't the saying 'Fight fire with fire?'

"I'll put out the flames he sends at you." she explained, "you try and pin him down."

I nodded, moving to the right of Mr. Jones. I sent a glare his way, and he sent a ball of flames at me. A spray of water put out the flames. Oh, how glad I was that Trinity's ability had been revealed. A look of irritation was spread on Mr. Jones's face.

I moved away, going behind Mr. Jones. He spun around with inhuman speed, sending a fireball at me. I dodged it, and it hit the wall, setting it ablaze. I could smell the smoke coming from it.

"Trinity!" I shouted "Put out the fire!"

Trinity sent a spray of water, which didn't hut the wall. It hit Mr. Jones. He was standing in front of the area where the flameball had hit.

"What are you doing?" I demanded "Are you insane?!" The answer to the second question was obvious, but I asked anyway.

"I will not let you put out the fire. Even if I have to die, I will not let you idiotic, rebelious shifters come out of here alive!"

I looked at the door, which was open. I pointed at the door. "You do know that the door is open, right?"

He pulled out his phone, and I heard a click noise as it opened. What was he doing? My question was quickly answered, when the door closed itself. Oh crap.

"You'd be willing to let yourself burn?" I asked, hoping to knock some sense into him. "You'd let yourself die, if it meant that we died?"

"It is what I promised when I joined the hunters. To be willing to sacrifice myself to put lowly species in their rightful places."

I heard Trinity begin to talk. "Then I guess Madelyn and I will have

to deal with you ourselves."

A stream of water was aimed at the spreading flames, and then at Mr. Jones. He chuckled in a deep, frightening tone.

"As if that scares me."

He held his hand up, like he did when he was preparing to shoot. But the water must've stopped it.

"Every ability has some sort of weakness, or something it can't do." said Trinity. "Now attack him. Free the shifters."

I stepped forward, looking at Mr. Jones. He glared, and I noticed his fists were now clenched. His lips were just a thin line, and he stepped away from the fire, coming at me. I moved out of the way, sending a kick at him. Mr. Jones cried out in pain, and swears came out of his mouth as if it were a waterfall.

"Shouldn't you do it?" I asked, looking over at Trinity.

"I'm trying to stop this building from collapsing on us. That or burning away and killing us. You do it."

I grabbed my knife, coming forward. He looked at me with narrowed eyes as he got to his feet. Trinity wasn't aiming at him, and so, he was free to aim fireballs at me. Which he did.

I moved out of the way as quick as I could, and I could smell the disgusting smell of the smoke. Another fireball was shot, sending the other wall ablaze. What was this guy? Fire mario?

I moved again, going behind Mr. Jones this time. He spun around, fire blazing in his hands. He shot it at me, and I dodged. I gripped my knife tightly, coming towards him. It was for the shifters. It was for the shifters, and for Caspian.

Just as I was about to stab Mr. Jones with the knife, a picture flashed in his place. It was Phred, lying there, weak, helpless, and dying. I had done that. I had killed Phred. And here I was, ready to kill Mr. Jones. Was I just some killer, like the hunters were? The image of Phred went away, leaving an armed Mr. Jones.

"I can't kill you." I muttered. "I killed Phred, and he was innocent."

Sure, Phred was innocent, and Mr. Jones probably wasn't, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. But I had to. I readied my knife again, and aimed at Mr. Jones. Phred appeared again, helpless and weak. I put the knife away, stepping back.

"I can't do it." I said to Trinity "I refuse to."

"Then I'll have to do it myself." she said, pulling out a sword. Who would've though that I'd get to see my friend armed with a sword.

I watched as Trinity stepped forward, and her knuckles were white, probably from gripping the sword. She avoided Mr. Jones's blasts of fire, putting them out with her own sprays of water. She stabbed Mr. Jones, and he stumbled over, clothing soaked with blood.

Before I had time to feel shocked, Trinity looked over at me.

"It's gonna burn," she shouted "We need to leave!"

And as if to prove her point, a piece of the ceiling fell in. I ran towards the door, but it was locked. Trinity must've seen, and pressed this button that was on Mr. Jones desk. The door slid open, and I ran out. Smoke filled the air, and over the commotion, I could hear a voice begin to speak.

"You may have defeated one leader, but now you have to defeat me."

A/N- First off, I would like to say that I am sorry for not updating. I got kind of busy, and didn't have much time to write.

Second of all, please vote, comment, share, and I'll see you in the comments. Bye for now.

Chapter 55

I spun around. A dark-haired man stared at me, seeming to radiate this insanity.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Head of the hunters," he replied "You defeated Mr. Jones, and now, I will defeat you."

"B-but it wasn't me!" I sputtered indignantly.

"He's dead, you're standing in front of the building where he died."

It was at that moment when he lunged at me, transforming into something. When red scales rippled across his skin, I knew what he was transforming into.

A dragon. Well, this just got so much harder.

I flew up, watching him. I kept my knife in hand, even though I knew that I'd have no chance at penetrating the scales. The head hunter flew up, sending a stream of fire my way, and I dodged it. But seriously. What was it with the hunters and fire?

I didn't stand a chance against him; he had scales and fire-breathing, while I was here, giving him an opportunity to shoot at me. My only option was to stall him until the others came up here. He came at me, and then, I saw a flash of something. A grin spread on my face. He had a soft, unprotected stomach. There were no scales there; I'd be able to get him!

I gripped my knife tighter, knuckles turning white. I dodged him, going behind the head hunter. He spun around, the large tail nearly knocking me out of the air. I looked at him carefully, waiting until

the underbelly was exposed.

"Hello, nice to fight you today." I said with mock enthusiasm. Hey, it couldn't hurt to taunt him. "But honestly, did you just wake up? Because you're fighting horribly."

He sent a spray of flames at me, and I flew up, looking at the scaly head. I couldn't get him from here, I needed to go down. But I didn't want to take the risk of become bird-bq.

"Try and get some of your friends to distract him."

So I did. "Trinity!" I called down, hoping that she'd hear me "We've got the head hunter over here. He's a stinking dragon. Help!"

I looked out on the bloody battlefield, looking for Trinity. Was she dead? Because I wasn't seeing her.

A large, scaly tail sent me flying backwards. Then, yet another stream of flames. A growl of irritation rose up in my throat. I flew forward, looking at the head hunter. He wasn't giving me an opportunity to attack the underbelly.

"Hey Mr. Big, Fat and Ugly," I taunted, smiling when I saw his irritation. I don't care what anybody says about this being too dangerous; seeing my enemy's irritation is a beautiful thing.

He shot even more fire at me, and I flew up yet again. He flew up, meeting my gaze. "Hello, Madelyn Ruth. You know, you still have an opportunity to submit. Then, you can be spared."

I let out a small chuckle. Did they seriously think that I was going to join them?

"You've asked me before; I said no. So shut up."

He let out a ferocious sounding roar, rising up as he did so. I saw his underbelly. It was exposed! I flew forward, knife in hand. I swept it across, and blood came out. I was swatted with a large, scaly 'paw', sending me backwards. The head hunter was irritated.

It was at that moment that Trinity flew up beside me. She wasn't dead!

"What do you need me to do?" she asked, then looked at the head hunter. "Well that's... nice."

"Distract him," I began "He has a weak spot; his stomach. I already got one blow in; you need to distract him so I can do more."

Trinity nodded, then sent a spray of water at the dragon's wings. It sent him back a little, but the water seemed to slide right off the leathery looking wings. I moved to the side of the dragon, still holding my knife. I was swatted out of the way.

I looked out on the battlefield, seeing nothing but fighting and blood. The sight made me sick to my stomach. I looked back at the dragon, seeing blood drip out of the wound. I flew under him, swiping the knife again. Blood sprayed onto my hands, but I didn't care. I was going to help the shifters. I was going to futfil Caspian's dying wish.

I was swatted out again, massive claws striking my left leg. Large gashes were there, bleeding out.

"Heal yourself," said Ashlea ***"Trinity is distracting the head hunter; now is you chance."***

I held my hand over the wound, wincing at the pain. The wound closed up after a minute long session of dizziness. I looked at the head hunter, and then at the underbelly. I gripped my knife until my knuckles turned white, aiming for the underbelly. I swiped it across multiple times, more blood coming out with each blow. The flaps of the head hunter's wings seemed to slow, and I moved out of the way as he began to fall. He moaned in pain.

"Heal me! Please! I beg of you!" the head hunter cried out.

"Don't do it, Madelyn."

"But he's weak. He's helpless and he's dying."

"But he isn't innocent. Phred was innocent, but the head hunter isn't. He's killed many shifters. If you heal him, he will only attack you again."

I looked as the head hunter's eyes dulled. He collapsed, breathing out. He was dead.

"You did the right thing. The shifters are safer now. You did the right thing. If Tyler were here, he'd tell you the same exact thing."

Tyler! I looked out at the battlefield, looking around frantically for him. I flew higher, looking at the battlefield. Where was he? Then, I saw Tyler, laying there bloody and dying.

A/N- One or two more chapters.

Please comment, vote, and I'll see you in the comments. Bye for now.

Chapter 56

I gasped, flying down to Tyler. I looked at Trinity.

"Keep the hunters away," I commanded "I'm gonna heal Tyler."

"No, Madelyn," I heard Tyler say in a weak tone of voice, "You'll die."

Caspian had told me the same thing. I had lost Caspian; I wasn't gonna lose Tyler too!

"I'm gonna save you. I'm not gonna let you die!"

Tyler shoved my hand away. "I can't let you."

"But I want to, Tyler." I said, trying to heal me. Tyler pushed my hand away.

"I can't have you dying, Madelyn."

"And neither can I. I'm going to heal you, even if it kills me."

"It will, Madelyn."

"Listen to Tyler, Madelyn."

"But I'm not going to let him die! Caspian died because he wouldn't let me heal him. Caspian's death could've been prevented. Now I'm going to make sure that I heal Tyler."

"I will take control of you," threatened Ashlea.

"You wouldn't."

I tried to heal Tyler, only to get my hands shoved away. "Madelyn, my wounds are fatal. If you heal me, you'll die!"

I fought back tears. "But what is life without... without you?"

"One of us is going to make it out of here alive. And that's going to be you. I will NOT let you sacrifice yourself for me."

"But I'm going to. I don't give a flying flip if it kills me!"

Tyler held my hand. "Madelyn, I can't let you die for me. I love you, Madelyn, and to be without you would be torture!"

I was past the point of listening to Tyler. I was going to heal him. I placed my hand over a wound, but it was only pushed away.

"No, Madelyn."

"I am going to heal you!" I shouted "Even if it kills me!"

"It will! And then, I'll be left behind, feeling as sad and hopeless as I did when my parents were killed. Is that what you want, Madelyn?"

"I want you to live, Tyler! I'd gladly sacrifice myself if it meant you'd live! Let me heal you!"

"No! I don't want you dying, Madelyn." he said, his voice growing weaker. It was killing me to see him in all that pain. But determination still burned bright in his eyes.

"And I don't want you dying!" I shouted back, looking at the bloody wounds. He was going to die if I didn't do something. "It'd hurt me if you died! I already let Caspian die; I'd never be able to live with myself if you died!"

"Let me die already, Madelyn. I'm a lost cause! I'll be even more of an emotional wreck if I lost you! Don't do it!"

I didn't listen to him. Caspian already died, but I wasn't going to let Tyler suffer the same fate! I put my hand over a large gash, not caring if it'd kill me. Waves of nausea washed over me, and stopped when Tyler pushed my hand away again.

"No, Madelyn!"

"I don't care, Tyler. A life without you would hurt me!"

"You will not die for me, Madelyn."

I moved my hand forward, putting it over a wound. I focused on the wound healing, closing up and making everything as it was before. I was going to save Tyler.

"No, Madelyn!" I heard a faint voice cry out. I ignored it, waves of nausea starting to come on. I felt Tyler's hand on my wrist, trying to pull my hand away. I stiffened my arm, trying to keep my hand above the wound. Everything seemed to become blurry.

"I am going to heal you, Tyler," I fired back, my own voice starting to sound weak. But I didn't care.

"You're going to die, Madelyn! Stop! You're going to die! "

"But Tyler will live."

I felt weaker, and the nausea made me feel like I was going to throw up. I didn't care. I was going to save Tyler. If I was going to give myself up for somebody, so that they could live, I was glad it'd be Tyler. The memory of the first time we kissed flashed through my mind. My heart ached, knowing that I'd leave behind the world, and Tyler. But it was for the best.

It was so that he could live. I was going to make sure he made it through this, whether I was dead or alive. After all, life would be painful without Tyler.

"Stop!" shouted Tyler, his voice sounding stronger. He was healing; it was working. He was going to make it out alive. He was going to live.

I was starting to feel weaker, probably from healing him. Trinity's words came back to me. 'Every power has a weakness.' And this was mine. I wasn't able to heal extremely large wounds, or it would kill me.

I could sense - I guess you could call it that - that all of Tyler's wounds were healing. But I felt weak. My breathing was heavy, and it felt like I couldn't get enough air into my lungs. This was how I was going to die.

Pain shot through my body, but I kept on healing Tyler. He was going to live. He was going to make it out of this. Even if it meant that I was going to die.

I collapsed, my breathing shallow. I was going to die. Black spots started to cover my vision, and I could hear faint shouts.

"Stay awake, Madelyn!" shouted a voice.

"Don't you die on me!" I heard Tyler shout "Don't die!"

I lifted my head, black spots creeping inward. I could see a blurry image of Tyler's face. He was healed. The thought relieved me.

Tyler was going to be okay. But I wasn't. I just hoped that there would be peace between the hunters and the shifters. I looked up at the sky, hardly able to breathe. I then collapsed, nearly all of my energy gone. I fought to keep breathing, even though I knew that it was pointless.

"Stay alive, Madelyn! Stay alive!"

Everything went black.

A/N- I updated twice. But not with good news.

I am evil, aren't I?

MUAHAHAHAHAHA

Look at the pic in the media I made that.

This is what my life has come to.

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you in the comments! Bye for now.

Chapter 57

I was surrounded in darkness. Pure, pitch black darkness. There wasn't a single speck of light anywhere. But where was I?

"Hello?" I called out. My words echoed back softly. "Tyler?!"

"He's not here."

"Then where is he? Where am I? Am I dead?"

"No, you're living, barely."

"I don't feel hurt."

"That is because you are in your mind."

"But why is it so dark?"

"Just think of a memory , and it will come to you."

I thought of one of the best moments of my life; when Tyler and I had kissed. The room, which was like a big dome, started to play the memory. I smiled, then felt a tinge of sadness.

"Am I going to die?"

"It is not for certain, Madelyn. Right now, you're laying in a bed, asleep. If you can find a way out of your mind, then you will be able to wake, and quite possibly, live."

"But how? Wasn't it supposed to kill me? How am I still alive? Is Tyler alive?"

"It was supposed to kill you. But through some strange miracle - actually, not a miracle, it was because of their testing on you - you're alive. Barely alive. You're in your mind now, as if this were just a dream."

"A dream, you say."

And that's when my year of obsession with all things hypnosis and sleep related was put to use. In a dream, if you're aware that you're dreaming, then you can usually manipulate the dream. But how would I use that to wake? I wasn't a beginner to lucid dreaming; I had done it a few times before, so I wasn't going to get that jolt out of my dream from surprise.

"Right now would be a great time for some advice."

"What do you use to exit a room?"

"A door, but how does that help me- oh."

"Yes."

Now, all I had to do was imagine a door out of here. Out of my mind and back into reality.

"Here I go," I muttered, looking at the spot where the door would go. I focused on home, on my parents, on Trinity, and most importantly, on Tyler. A door appeared, and I stepped through.

Nothing happened.

"I need more advice."

"You're the one who studied dreams for a year. I know about that topic as well, but sometimes, you need to figure things out on your own."

"Thanks for the help," I said sarcastically. But then I got to thinking. If adrenaline from the excitement of having a lucid dream could wake someone, then couldn't I get something or someone to scare the crap outta me so that I can wake up?

But before I could do that, I saw a small door - it wasn't even a foot tall - on the wall. I stepped forward, going to the door. I shifted, going through. Everything seemed to be white now, but then I a face. Smells rushed into my nostrils, and I knew where I was. A

hospital of some sort. Either that, or a lab. I started to panic. Had I woken, only to be trapped at the lab?

"She's up." said a voice. I tried to sit up, but laid back down when I felt pain.

I heard the noise of many people coming to the room.

"Where am I?" I asked, hoping that it wasn't the lab.

"You're at the hospital." replied a voice.

I could see gashes on myself, and I looked away. "I'm alive."

"You were almost dead when you were brought here. If it had been a minute later, I doubt you would've made it."

So I wasn't going to die. But where was Tyler? "Where's Tyler?"

"He's fine." he assured me.

It was a while before I was good enough to go home. But I was greeted with good news; the peace treaty was going to be signed. The rivalry was going to be over. I could hardly believe it.

When I was going home, I was told to take it easy for a few weeks, which meant no flying or shifting. Still, I was happy that I was alive.

I was going home. When I arrived at the house, I looked at it. I hadn't been there in so, so long. I opened the door, walking in. Tyler looked up.

"Madelyn! You're home! You made it! I thought you were going to die! You collapsed! You were hardly breathing! I thought you were gone!"

"But I'm still alive."

"You are."

The treaty was signed a month or two later. The shifters were going to be safe. Caspian's wish had been accomplished. The hunters were now more focused on the more dangerous beings that killed without mercy. However, the vampires lived on the other side of the world, so we were safe. Apparently, the UK was crawling with them. And that's where most of the hunters were; protecting people.

I could hardly believe that both of our kinds were able to get along. We were safe. We were going to stay safe. We wouldn't have to live in fear any longer.

And Tyler and I's relationship? It was doing good. We were able to go and hang out instead of having to run from hunters, which was nice.

There was a trending tag at one point. It was called 'Girl who Speaks to Birds'.

And I guess that's me.

A/N- AND SHABOOM.

THIRD NOVEL THAT I'VE EVER WRITTEN.

FINISHED!

But did you see where I said this? :

'However, the vampires lived on the other side of the world, so we were safe. Apparently, the UK was crawling with them. And that's where most of the hunters were; protecting people.'

Did I just leave a possible sequel opening? *puts hands on cheeks in mock shock* I guess I did.

Yeah, new chapter of new book will be up tomorrow, be on the lookout for it.

I guess this is the end of Girl who Speaks to Birds.

Or is it?

Please comment, vote, share, and I'll see you one last time (for this book) in the comments. Bye for now.

P.S- Is the media a better cover than the current one?

Author's Note

Because the rewrite of this book isn't doing well, I'm coming here. This book will be up for a little while (a week or so) so that everybody who read this book can see this note

I would deeply appreciate it if all of you readers of girl who speaks to birds could check out the rewrite of this book.

It isn't a simple rewrite, mind you. I am reworking character arcs, removing some characters, adding more emotion, and overall making the book something that could do well and get good reviews when it is published

The rewrite is sitting at a measly 174 reads, which is kind of sad compared to the 10K or so of this book. So please, head over to the rewrite and give it some love.

FOR ALL OF YOU WHO ENJOYED THIS BOOK

THE THIRD DRAFT IS UP AND GOING STRONG. UPDATES OCCUR EVERY THREE DAYS, BUT WILL OCCUR EVERY TWO DAYS STARTING JULY 20TH.

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS BOOK, PLEASE SUPPORT THE THIRD REWRITE, WHICH WILL BE THE LAST REWRITE OF GIRL WHO SPEAKS TO BIRDS TO APPEAR ON WATTPAD

UPDATES, NEWS, AND A NEW BOOK

Yes, I know that I took a pretty long hiatus from Wattpad, but I'm back now, and I am happy to say that the final revisions of Girl who Speaks to Birds are now underway! It's only a few months now at this point, folks, and I couldn't have reached it without the success of all you amazing readers, so thank you all for your continued support.

In addition to work on Girl who Speaks to Birds, I'm also starting up a brand new story here on Wattpad, titled 'From the Lab'. The first two parts are up now, so go check them out if you have the chance! Updates will be once or twice a week, and always *at least* a thousand words each (excluding the prologue).

I would like to thank all of my readers again for the continued support of Girl who Speaks to Birds, as well as my other novels here on Wattpad. Thank you!